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THE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, A.M.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.

LONDON:
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-Noster-Row.*

M,DCC,LXII.

A

SERIOUS CALL

TO A

DEVOUT and HOLY LIFE.

ADAPTED TO

The State and Condition of all Orders of CHRISTIANS.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, A. M.

The SIXTH EDITION.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.
St. LUKE viii. 8.

And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.
REV. xxii. 12.

LONDON:

Printed for W. INNYS and J. RICHARDSON in *Pater-noſter-Row.*

MDCCLIII.

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SERIOUS CALL

TO A

Devout and Holy Life.

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A SERI-

A

SERIOUS CALL

TO A

Devout *and* Holy Life.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Nature and Extent of Chriſtian Devotion.

DEVOTION is neither *private* nor *publick* Prayer, but Prayers whether private or publick, are particular parts or inſtances of Devotion. Devotion ſignifies a life given, or *devoted* to God.

He therefore is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own *will*, or the *way* and *ſpirit* of the world, but to the ſole will of God, who conſiders God in every thing, who ſerves God in every thing,

who makes all the parts of his *common* life, parts of piety, by doing every thing in the name of God, and under ſuch rules as are conformable to his Glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and meaſure of our *Prayers*; that in them we are to look *wholly* unto him, and act wholly for him; that we are only to pray in *ſuch a manner*, for *ſuch things*, and *ſuch ends* as are ſuitable to his Glory.

Now let any one but find out the reaſon why he is to be thus ſtrictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the ſame as ſtrong a reaſon to be as ſtrictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the leaſt ſhadow of a reaſon, why we ſhould make God the *rule* and *meaſure* of our prayers; why we ſhould then look *wholly* unto him, and pray according to his will; but what equally proves it neceſſary for us to look *wholly* unto God, and make him the *rule* and *meaſure* of all the other actions of our life. For any ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our *parts*, our *time* or *money*, that is not *ſtrictly* according to the will of God, that is not for ſuch *ends* as are ſuitable to his Glory, are as great *abſurdities* and *failings*, as prayers that are not according to the will of God. For there is no other reaſon, why our prayers ſhould be according to the will of God, why they ſhould have nothing in them, but what is *wiſe*, and *holy* and *heavenly*, there is no other reaſon for this, but that our lives may be

of

of the same nature, full of the same *wisdom*, *holiness* and *heavenly* tempers, that we may *live* unto God in the *same spirit* that we pray unto him. Were it not our strict duty to live by *reason*, to devote *all* the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing every thing in his name, and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most *heavenly prayers*. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities, they would be like Prayers for *wings*, when it was no part of our duty to *fly*.

As sure therefore as there is any wisdom in praying for the spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of *all* our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look *wholly* unto God in our Prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live *wholly* unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto him in all the *ordinary* actions of our life, unless he be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our Prayers look *wholly* unto him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in *labour* or *diversion*, whether they consume our *time*, or our *money*, are alike unreasonable and absurd Prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

'Tis for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a *mixture* of

Ridicule in the lives of many People. You ſee them ſtrict as to ſome *times* and *places* of Devotion, but when the ſervice of the *Church* is over, they are but like thoſe that ſeldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of ſpending their *time* and *money*, in their *cares* and *fears*, in their *pleaſures* and *indulgences*, in their labour and diverſions, they are like the reſt of the world. This makes the looſe part of the world generally make a jeſt of thoſe that are *devout*, becauſe they ſee their Devotion goes no farther than their *Prayers*, and that when they are over, they live no more unto God, till the time of Prayer returns again; but live by the ſame *humour* and *fancy*, and in as full an enjoyment of all the *follies* of life as other People. This is the reaſon why they are the jeſt and ſcorn of careleſs and worldly People; not becauſe they are really devoted to God, but becauſe they appear to have no other Devotion, but that of *occaſional Prayers*.

Julius is very fearful of miſſing Prayers; all the Pariſh ſuppoſes *Julius* to be ſick, if he is not at *Church*. But if you was to ask him why he ſpends the reſt of his time by *humour* and *chance?* why he is a companion of the fillieſt People in their moſt *filly pleaſures?* why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diverſion? If you was to ask him why there is no amuſement too trifling to pleaſe him? why he is buſy at all *balls* and *aſſembles?* why he gives himſelf up to an *idle*

goſſip-

gossiping converſation? why he lives in fooliſh friendſhips and fondneſs for particular perſons, that neither want nor deſerve any particular kindneſs? why he allows himſelf in fooliſh hatreds and reſentments againſt particular perſons, without conſidering that he is to love every body as himſelf? if you ask him why he never puts his *converſation*, his *time*, and *fortune*, under the rules of Religion, *Julius* has no more to ſay for himſelf, than the moſt diſorderly Perſon. For the whole tenor of Scripture lies as directly againſt ſuch a life, as againſt *debauchery* and *intemperance*: He that lives in ſuch a courſe of *idleneſs* and *folly*, lives no more according to the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man was to tell *Julius* that there was no occaſion for ſo much conſtancy at Prayers, and that he might, without any harm to himſelf, neglect the ſervice of the Church, as the generality of People do, *Julius* would think ſuch a one to be no Chriſtian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a perſon only tells him, that he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himſelf as others do, that he may ſpend his *time* and *money* as People of faſhion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and paſſions as moſt People do, *Julius* never ſuſpects that man to want a chriſtian ſpirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

And if *Julius* was to read all the New Teſtament from the beginning to the end, he would find his courſe of life condemn'd in every page of it.

And indeed there cannot any thing be imagined more abſurd in itſelf, than *wiſe* and *ſublime*, and *heavenly* Prayers added to a life of *vanity* and *folly*, where neither *labour* nor *diverſions*, neither *time* nor *money*, are under the direction of the wiſdom and heavenly tempers of our Prayers. If we were to ſee a man pretending to act *wholly* with regard to God in every thing that he did, that would neither ſpend time or money, or take any labour or diverſion, but ſo far as he could act according to ſtrict principles of reaſon and piety, and yet at the ſame time neglect *all Prayer*, whether publick or private, ſhould we not be amaz'd at ſuch a man, and wonder how he could have ſo much folly along with ſo much religion?

Yet this is as reaſonable as for any perſon to pretend to ſtrictneſs in *Devotion*, to be careful of obſerving *times* and *places* of Prayer, and yet letting the reſt of his life, his *time* and *labour*, his *talents* and *money* be diſpoſed of without any regard to ſtrict rules of Piety and Devotion. For it is as great an abſurdity to ſuppoſe holy Prayers, and divine Petitions, without an holineſs of life ſuitable to them, as to ſuppoſe an holy and divine life without Prayers.

Let

Let any one therefore think, how eaſily he could confute a man that pretended to great ſtrictneſs of Life without Prayer, and the ſame Arguments will as plainly confute another, that pretends to *ſtrictneſs* of *Prayer*, without carrying the ſame ſtrictneſs into every other part of life. For to be weak and fooliſh in ſpending our *time* and *fortune*, is no greater a miſtake, than to be weak and fooliſh in relation to our *Prayers*. And to allow our ſelves in any ways of life that neither are, nor can be offer'd to God, is the ſame irreligion as to neglect our Prayers, or uſe them in ſuch a manner, as makes them an offering unworthy of God.

The ſhort of the matter is this, either Reaſon and Religion preſcribe *rules* and *ends* to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not: If they do, then it is as neceſſary to govern all our actions by thoſe rules, as it is neceſſary to worſhip God. For if Religion teaches us any thing concerning *eating* and *drinking*, or ſpending our *time* and *money*; if it teaches us how we are to *uſe* and *contemn* the world; if it tells us what tempers we are to have in *common* life, how we are to be diſpoſed towards all people, how we are to behave towards the *ſick*, the *poor*, the *old* and *deſtitute*; if it tells us whom we are to treat with a *particular* love, whom we are to regard with a particular eſteem; if it tells us how we are to treat our enemies, and how we are to mortify and deny our ſelves, he muſt

be very weak that can think theſe parts of Religion are not to be obſerv'd with as much *exactneſs*, as any doctrines that relate to Prayers.

It is very obſervable, that there is not one command in all the Goſpel for *Publick Worſhip*; and perhaps it is a duty that is leaſt inſiſted upon in Scripture of any other. The frequent attendance at it is never ſo much as mention'd in all the New Teſtament. Whereas that *Religion* or *Devotion* which is to govern the *ordinary actions* of our life, is to be found in almoſt every verſe of Scripture. Our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles are wholly taken up in Doctrines that relate to *common life*. They call us to renounce the world, and differ in every *temper* and *way* of life, from the ſpirit and way of the world. To renounce all its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happineſs. To be as new *born babes*, that are born into a new ſtate of things; to live as *Pilgrims* in ſpiritual watching, in holy fear, and heavenly aſpiring after another life. To take up our daily croſs, to deny our ſelves, to profeſs the bleſſedneſs of mourning, to ſeek the bleſſedneſs of poverty of ſpirit. To forſake the pride and vanity of Riches, to take no thought for the morrow, to live in the profoundeſt State of Humility, to rejoice in worldly ſufferings. To reject the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life; to bear injuries, to forgive and bleſs our enemies,

mies, and to love mankind as God loveth them. To give up our whole hearts and affections to God, and ſtrive to enter through the ſtrait gate into a life of eternal Glory.

This is the *common Devotion* which our Bleſſed Saviour taught, in order to make it the *common life* of all Chriſtians. It is not therefore exceeding ſtrange, that People ſhould place ſo much piety in the attendance upon publick worſhip, concerning which there is not one precept of our Lord's to be found, and yet neglect theſe common duties of our *ordinary* life, which are commanded in every Page of the Goſpel? I call theſe duties the devotion of our *common life*, becauſe if they are to be practis'd, they muſt be made parts of our common life, they can have no place any where elſe.

If *contempt* of the world, and *heavenly* affection, is a neceſſary temper of Chriſtians, it is neceſſary that this temper appear in the whole courſe of their lives, in their manner of uſing the world, becauſe it can have no place any where elſe.

If *ſelf-denial* be a condition of ſalvation, all that would be ſaved, muſt make it a part of their *ordinary* life. If *humility* be a chriſtian duty, then the common life of a Chriſtian, is to be a conſtant courſe of humility in all its kinds. If *poverty of ſpirit* be neceſſary, it muſt be the ſpirit and temper of *every day* of our lives. If we are to *relieve* the naked, the ſick, and the priſoner, it muſt be

the

the common charity of our lives, as far as we can render our ſelves able to perform it. If we are to *love our enemies*, we muſt make our common life a viſible exerciſe and demonſtration of that love. If *content* and *thankfulneſs*, if the patient bearing of evil be duties to God, they are the Duties of every Day, and in every circumſtance of our life. If we are to be wiſe and holy as the new-born ſons of God, we can no otherwiſe be ſo, but by renouncing every thing that is fooliſh and vain in every part of our common life. If we are to be in Chriſt *new creatures*, we muſt ſhew that we are ſo, by having *new ways* of living in the world. If we are to *follow* Chriſt, it muſt be in our common way of ſpending every day.

Thus it is in all the virtues and holy tempers of Chriſtianity, they are not *ours* unleſs they be the virtues and tempers of our *ordinary life*. So that Chriſtianity is ſo far from leaving us to live in the common ways of life, conforming to the folly of cuſtoms, and gratifying the paſſions and tempers which the ſpirit of the world delights in, it is ſo far from indulging us in any of theſe things, that all its virtues which it makes neceſſary to ſalvation, are only ſo many ways of living above, and contrary to the world in all the common actions of our life. If our common life is not a common courſe of *humility*, *ſelf-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *poverty* of ſpirit, and

heavenly

heavenly affection, we don't live the lives of Christians.

But yet though it is thus plain, that this and this alone is Christianity, an uniform open and visible practice of all these virtues, yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found, even amongst the better sort of People. You see them often at Church, and pleas'd with fine preachers, but look into their lives, and you see them just the same sort of People as others are, that make no pretences to devotion. The difference that you find betwixt them is only the difference of their natural tempers. They have the same *taste* of the world, the same worldly *cares*, and *fears*, and *joys*; they have the same *turn* of mind, equally *vain* in their desires. You see the same fondness for *state* and *equipage*, the same *pride* and vanity of *dress*, the same *self-love* and *indulgence*, the same foolish *friendships*, and groundless *hatreds*, the same *levity* of mind, and *trifling* spirit, the same *fondness* for diversions, the same idle dispositions, and vain ways of spending their time in visiting and conversation, as the rest of the world, that make no pretences to devotion.

I don't mean this comparison betwixt People seemingly good and profess'd *rakes*, but betwixt People of sober lives. Let us take an instance in two modest Women: let it be supposed, that one of them is careful of times of Devotion, and observes them thro' a sense of

of duty, and that the other has no hearty concern about it, but is at Church ſeldom or often, juſt as it happens. Now it is a very eaſy thing to ſee this difference betwixt theſe perſons. But when you have ſeen this, can you find any farther difference betwixt them? Can you find that their *common life* is of a different kind? Are not the *tempers*, and *cuſtoms*, and *manners* of the one, of the ſame kind as of the other? Do they live as if they belonged to different worlds, had different views in their heads, and different rules and meaſures of all their actions? Have they not the ſame *goods* and *evils*, are they not pleaſed and diſpleaſed in the *ſame manner*, and for the ſame things? Do they not live in the ſame courſe of life? Does one ſeem to be of this world, looking at the things that are temporal, and the other to be of another world, looking wholly at the things that are eternal? Does the one live in pleaſure, delighting her ſelf in *ſhew* or *dreſs*, and the other live in *ſelf-denial* and *mortification*, renouncing every thing that looks like vanity, either of *perſon*, *dreſs*, or *carriage*? Does the one follow *publick diverſions*, and trifle away her time in *idle* viſits, and *corrupt* converſation, and does the other ſtudy all the arts of improving her time, living in Prayer and Watching and ſuch good works, as may make all her time turn to her advantage, and be placed to her account at the laſt day? Is the one careleſs of expence, and glad to be able to adorn her ſelf with every coſtly ornament of

dreſs,

dreſs, and does the other conſider her fortune as a talent given her by God, which is to be improv'd religiouſly, and no more to be ſpent in vain and needleſs ornaments, than it is to be buried in the earth?

Where muſt you look, to find one Perſon of Religion differing in this manner, from another that has none? And yet if they do not differ in theſe things which are here related, can it with any ſenſe be ſaid, the one is a *good* Chriſtian, and the other not?

Take another inſtance amongſt the men. *Leo* has a great deal of good nature, has kept what they call, *good* company, hates every thing that is *falſe* and *baſe*, is very generous and brave to his friends, but has concern'd himſelf ſo little with Religion, that he hardly knows the difference betwixt a *Jew* and a *Chriſtian*.

Euſebius on the other hand, has had early impreſſions of Religion, and buys books of Devotion. He can talk of all the *feaſts* and *faſts* of the Church, and knows the *names* of moſt men that have been eminent for piety. You never hear him ſwear, or make a looſe jeſt, and when he talks of Religion he talks of it, as of a matter of the laſt concern.

Here you ſee, that one perſon has Religion enough, according to the way of the world, to be reckon'd a *pious Chriſtian*, and the other is ſo far from all appearance of Religion, that he may fairly be reckon'd a *Heathen*; and yet if you look into their *common life*, if you examine

amine their *chief* and *ruling* tempers in the greatest *articles* of life, or the greatest *doctrines* of Christianity, you will find the least difference imaginable.

Consider them with regard to the use of the world, because that is what every body can see.

Now to have right *notions* and *tempers* with relation to this world, is as essential to religion, as to have right notions of God. And it is as possible for a man to worship a *Crocodile*, and yet be a *pious man*, as to have his affections set upon this world, and yet be a *good Christian*.

But now if you consider *Leo* and *Eusebius* in this respect, you will find them exactly alike, *seeking*, *using*, and *enjoying* all that can be got in this world in the same manner, and for the same ends. You will find that *riches*, *prosperity*, *pleasures*, *indulgences*, *state*, *equipage*, and *honour* are just as much the happiness of *Eusebius* as they are of *Leo*. And yet if Christianity has not changed a man's mind and temper with relation to these things, what can we say that it has done for him?

For if the doctrines of Christianity were practised, they would make a man as different from other people as to all *worldly* tempers, *sensual* pleasures, and the *pride* of life, as a *wise* man is different from a *natural*; it would be as easy a thing to know a Christian by his *outward course* of life as it is now difficult to find any body that lives it. For it is notorious

that

that Christians are now not only like other men in their *frailties* and *infirmities*, this might be in some degree excusable, but the complaint is, they are like *Heathens* in all the *main* and *chief articles* of their lives. They enjoy the world, and live every day in the same tempers, and the same designs, and the same indulgences as they did who knew not God, nor of any happiness in another life. Every body that is capable of any reflexion, must have observ'd, that this is generally the state even of devout people, whether *men* or *women*. You may see them different from other people so far as to *times* and *places* of prayer, but generally like the rest of the world in all the other parts of their lives. That is, adding *Christian* Devotion to an *Heathen* life: I have the authority of our Blessed Saviour for his remark, where he says, *take no thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be cloathed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.* But if to be thus affected even with the necessary things of this life, shews that we are not yet of a *Christian Spirit*, but are like the *Heathens*, surely to enjoy the vanity and folly of the world as they did, to be like them in the main chief tempers of our lives, in self-love and indulgence, in sensual pleasures and diversions, in the vanity of dress, the love of shew and greatness, or any other gaudy distinctions of fortune, is a much greater sign of an *heathen* temper. And consequently

ſequently they who add Devotion to ſuch a life, muſt be ſaid to *pray* as *Chriſtians*, but *live* as *heathens*.

CHAP. II.

An enquiry into the Reaſon, why the generality of Chriſtians *fall ſo far ſhort of the Holineſs and Devotion of Chriſtianity.*

IT may now be reaſonably requir'd, how it comes to paſs, that the lives even of the better ſort of people are thus ſtrangely contrary to the principles of chriſtianity?

But before I give a direct anſwer to this, I deſire it may alſo be enquir'd, how it comes to paſs that *ſwearing* is ſo common a vice amongſt Chriſtians? It is indeed not *yet* ſo common amongſt *women*, as it is amongſt *men*. But amongſt men this ſin is ſo common, that perhaps there are more than *two* in *three* that are guilty of it through the whole courſe of there lives, ſwearing *more* or *leſs*, juſt as it happens, ſome conſtantly, others only now and then as it were by chance. Now, I ask how comes it, that two in three of the men are guilty of ſo groſs and prophane a ſin as this is? There is neither ignorance nor human infirmity to plead for it: It is againſt an expreſs

preſs commandment, and the moſt plain Doctrine of our bleſſed Saviour

Do but now find the reaſon why the generality of men live in this notorious vice, and then you will have found the reaſon, why the generality even of the better ſort of people, live ſo contrary to Chriſtianity.

Now the reaſon of common ſwearing is this; it is becauſe men have not ſo much as the *intention to pleaſe God in all their actions*, For let a man but have ſo much piety as to *intend to pleaſe God in all the actions of his life, as the happieſt and beſt thing in the world*; and then he will never ſwear more. It will be as impoſſible for him to ſwear, whilſt he feels *this intention* within himſelf, as it is impoſſible for a man that intends to pleaſe his Prince, to go up and abuſe him to his face.

It ſeems but a ſmall and neceſſary part of piety to have ſuch a *ſincere intention* as this; and that he has no reaſon to look upon himſelf as a Diſciple of Chriſt, who is not thus far advanced in piety. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety, that you ſee ſuch a mixture of ſin and folly in the lives even of the better ſort of People. It is for want of this *intention*, that you ſee men that profeſs religion, yet live in *ſwearing* and *ſenſuality*; that you ſee *Clergymen* given to pride and covetouſneſs, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this *intention*, that you ſee *women* that profeſs Devotion, yet living in all the folly and vanity of *dreſs*, waſting their

time in *idleneſs* and *pleaſures*, and in all ſuch inſtances of ſtate and equipage as their eſtates will reach. For let but a woman feel her heart full of *this intention*, and ſhe will find it as impoſſible to *patch* or *paint*, as to curſe or ſwear; ſhe will no more deſire to ſhine at *Balls* and *Aſſemblies*, or make a figure amongſt thoſe that are moſt finely dreſs'd, than ſhe will deſire to dance upon a *Rope* to pleaſe Spectators: She will know, that the one is as far from the *wiſdom* and *excellency* of the chriſtian Spirit, as the other.

It was this *general intention*, that made the *primitive Chriſtians* ſuch eminent inſtances of piety, that made the goodly fellowſhip of the *ſaints*, and all the glorious army of *martyrs* and *confeſſors*. And if you will here ſtop, and ask your ſelf, why you are not as pious as the primitive Chriſtians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through *ignorance* nor *inability*, but purely becauſe you never *thoroughly intended it*. You obſerve the ſame *Sunday-worſhip* that they did; and you are *ſtrict* in it, becauſe it is your full *intention* to be ſo. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their *ordinary common* life, when you intend to pleaſe God in *all your actions*, you will find it as poſſible, as to be ſtrictly exact in the ſervice of the Church. And when you have this *intention to pleaſe God in all your actions, as the happieſt and beſt thing in the world*, you will find in you as great an averſion to every thing that is *vain*

and

and *impertinent* in common life, whether of buſineſs or pleaſure, as you now have to any thing that is *prophane*. You will be as fearful of living in any fooliſh way, either of ſpending your *time*, or your *fortune*, as you are now fearful of neglecting the publick Worſhip.

Now who that wants this general ſincere *intention*, can be reckon'd a Chriſtian? And yet if it was amongſt Chriſtians, it would change the whole face of the world; true piety, and exemplary holineſs, would be as common and viſible, as *buying* and *ſelling*, or any trade in life.

Let a *Clergyman* but be thus *pious*, and he will *converſe* as if he had been brought up by an *Apoſtle*; he will no more think and talk of *noble preferment*, than of *noble eating*, or a *glorious chariot*. He will no more complain of the *frowns* of the *world*, or a *ſmall cure*, or the want of a *patron*, than he will complain of the want of a *lac'd coat*, or a *running horſe*. Let him but *intend to pleaſe God, in all his actions*, as *the happieſt and beſt thing in the world*, and then he will know, that there is nothing *noble* in a Clergyman, but a burning zeal for the ſalvation of ſouls; nor any thing poor in his profeſſion, but *idleneſs* and a *worldly* Spirit.

Again, let a *Tradeſman* but have this *intention*, and it will make him a ſaint in his *ſhop*; his every-day buſineſs will be a courſe of wiſe and reaſonable actions, made holy to God, by

being done in obedience to his will and pleaſure. He will *buy* and *ſell*, and *labour* and travel, becauſe by ſo doing he can do ſome good to himſelf and others. But then, as nothing can pleaſe God but what is wiſe, and reaſonable, and holy, ſo he will neither buy, nor ſell, nor labour in any other *manner*, nor to any other *end*, but ſuch as may be ſhewn to be *wiſe*, and *reaſonable*, and *holy*. He will therefore conſider, not what arts, or methods, or application will ſooneſt make him richer and greater than his brethren, or remove him from a *ſhop* to a life of *ſtate* and *pleaſure*; but he will conſider what arts, what methods what application can make worldly buſineſs moſt acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holineſs, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and ſpirit of every tradeſman; he cannot ſtop ſhort of theſe degrees of piety, whenever it is his *intention to pleaſe God in all his actions, as the beſt and happieſt thing in the world.*

And, on the other hand, whoever is not of this ſpirit and temper in his *trade* and *profeſſion*, and does not carry it on only ſo far as is beſt ſubſervient to a wiſe and holy and heavenly life; it is certain that he has not this *intention*, and yet without it, who can be ſhewn to be a follower of Jeſus Chriſt?

Again, let the *Gentleman* of birth and fortune but have this *intention*, and you will ſee how it will carry him from every appearance of evil, to every inſtance of piety and goodneſs.

He

He cannot live by *chance*, or as *humour* and fancy carries him, becauſe he knows that nothing can pleaſe God but a wiſe and regular courſe of life. He cannot live in *idleneſs* and *indulgence*, in *ſports* and *gaming*, in pleaſures and intemperance, in vain expences and high living, becauſe theſe things cannot be turned into means of piety and holineſs, or made ſo many parts of a wiſe and religious life.

As he thus removes from all appearance of evil, ſo he haſtens and aſpires after every inſtance of goodneſs. He does not aſk what is *allowable* and *pardonable*, but what is *commendable* and *praiſe-worthy*. He does not aſk whether God will forgive the *folly* of our lives, the *madneſs* of our pleaſures, the *vanity* of our expences, the richneſs of our *equipage*, and the careleſs conſumption of our *time*; but he aſks, whether God is pleaſed with theſe things, or whether theſe are the appointed ways of gaining his favour? He does not enquire, whether it be pardonable to hoard up money, to adorn our ſelves with diamonds, and gild our chariots, whilſt the *widow* and the *orphan*, the *ſick* and the *priſoner* want to be reliev'd: but he aſks, whether God has required theſe things at our hands, whether we ſhall be call'd to account at the laſt day for the neglect of them; becauſe it is not his intent to live in ſuch ways as, for ought we know, God may *perhaps* pardon; but to be diligent in ſuch ways, as we know, that God will *infallibly* reward.

He will not therefore look at the lives of Chriſtians, to learn how he ought to ſpend his eſtate, but he will look into the Scriptures, and make every *doctrine*, *parable*, *precept*, or *inſtruction* that relates to rich men, a *law* to himſelf in the uſe of his eſtate.

He will have nothing to do with coſtly apparel, becauſe the rich man in the Goſpel was *cloathed with purple and fine linnen*. He denies himſelf the *pleaſures* and *indulgences* which his eſtate could procure, becauſe our bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your conſolation*. He will have but *one rule* for charity, and that will be, to ſpend *all* that he can that way, becauſe the judge of quick and dead hath ſaid, that all that is ſo given, is given to him.

He will have no *hoſpitable table* for the rich and wealthy to come and feaſt with him in good eating and drinking; becauſe our bleſſed Lord ſaith, *When thou makeſt a dinner, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor thy rich neighbours, leſt they alſo bid the again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed. For they cannot recompence thee, for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.*

Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

He will waſte no money in gilded roofs, or coſtly furniture: He will not be carried from pleaſure to pleaſure in expenſive ſtate and equipage,

equipage, becauſe an inſpir'd Apoſtle hath ſaid, that *all that is in the world*, the *luſt of the fleſh*, *the luſt of the eyes*, and *the pride of life*, *is not of the Father*, *but is of the world.*

Let not any one look upon this as an imaginary deſcription of charity, that looks fine in the notion, but cannot be put in practice. For it is ſo far from being an imaginary impracticable form of life, that it has been practiſed by great numbers of Chriſtians in former ages, who were glad to turn their whole eſtates into a conſtant courſe of charity. And it is ſo far from being impoſſible now, that if we can find any Chriſtians, that ſincerely *intend to pleaſe God in all their actions as the beſt and happieſt thing in the world*, whether they be young or old, ſingle or married, men or women, if they have but this *intention*, it will be impoſſible for them to do otherwiſe. This one principle will infallibly carry them to this height of charity, and they will find themſelves unable to ſtop ſhort of it.

For how is it poſſible for a man that *intends* to pleaſe God in the uſe of his *money*, and intends it becauſe he judges it to be his *greateſt happineſs*, how is it poſſible for ſuch a one in ſuch a ſtate of mind, to bury his money in *needleſs*, *impertinent* finery; in covering himſelf or his *horſes* with gold, whilſt there are any works of piety and charity to be done with it; or any ways of ſpending it well?

This is as ſtrictly impoſſible, as for a man that intends to pleaſe God in his *words*, to go into company on purpoſe to *ſwear* and *lye*. For as all waſte and unreaſonable expence is done *deſignedly* and with *deliberation*, ſo no one can be guilty of it, whoſe *conſtant intention* is to pleaſe God in the uſe of his *money*.

I have choſe to explain this matter, by appealing to this *intention*, becauſe it makes the caſe ſo plain, and becauſe every one that has a mind, may ſee it in the cleareſt light, and feel it in the ſtrongeſt manner, only by looking into his own Heart. For it is as eaſy for every perſon to know, whether he *intends* to pleaſe God in *all* his actions; as for any *ſervant* to know, whether this be his intention towards his *maſter*. Every one alſo can as eaſily tell how he lays out his money, and whether he conſiders how to pleaſe God in it, as he can tell where his eſtate is, and whether it be in *money* or *land*. So that here is no plea left for *ignorance* or *frailty*, as to this matter, every body is in the *light*, and every body has *power*. And no one can fail, but he that is not ſo much a Chriſtian, as to *intend* to pleaſe God in the uſe of his eſtate.

You ſee two perſons, one is regular in *publick* and *private* Prayer, the other is not. Now the reaſon of this difference is not this, that one has *ſtrength* and *power* to obſerve Prayer, and the other has not; but the reaſon is this, that one *intends to pleaſe* God in the *duties* of Devotion, and the other has no intention about

bout it. Now the case is the same, in the right or wrong use of our *time* and *money*. You see one person throwing away his time in *sleep* and *idleness*, in *visiting* and *diversions*, and his money in the most vain and unreasonable expences. You see another careful of every day, dividing his hours by rules of Reason and Religion, and spending all his money in works of charity; now the difference is not owing to this, that one has strength and power to do thus, and the other has not; but it is owing to this, that one *intends to please God* in the right use of all his *time* and all his *money*, and the other has no intention about it.

Here therefore let us judge our selves sincerely, let us not vainly content our selves with the common disorders of our lives, the *vanity* of our expences, the *folly* of our diversions, the *pride* of our habits, the *idleness* of our lives, and the *wasting* of our time, fancying that these are *such imperfections* as we fall into thro' the unavoidable *weakness* and *frailty* of our natures; but let us be assured, that these disorders of our *common* life are owing to this, that we have not so much Christianity, as *to intend to please God in all the actions of our life, as the best and happiest thing in the world.* So that we must not look upon ourselves in a state of common and pardonable imperfection, but in such a state, as wants the *first* and *most fundamental* principle

ciple of Chriſtianity, *viz. an intention to pleaſe God in all our actions.*

And if any one was to aſk himſelf, how it comes to paſs, that there are any *degrees* of ſobriety which he neglects, any *practices* of humility which he wants, any *method* of charity which he does not follow, any *rules* of redeeming time which he does not obſerve, his own heart will tell him, that it is becauſe he never *intended* to be ſo exact in thoſe duties. For whenever we fully intend it, it is as poſſible to conform to all this *regularity* of life, as 'tis poſſible for a man to obſerve *times* of Prayer.

So that the fault does not lie here, that we deſire to be good and perfect, but thro' the weakneſs of our nature fall ſhort of it; but it is, becauſe we have not piety enough to *intend* to be as good as we can, or to pleaſe God in *all the actions* of our life. This we ſee is plainly the caſe of him that ſpends his time in *ſports*, when he ſhould be at *Church*; it is not his want of power, but his want of *intention*, or deſire to be there.

And the caſe is plainly the ſame in every other folly of human life. *She* that ſpends her time and money in the unreaſonable ways and faſhions of the world, does not do ſo, becauſe ſhe wants power to be wiſe and religious in the management of her time and money, but becauſe ſhe has no *intention* or deſire of being ſo. When ſhe feels this intention, ſhe will

will find it as poſſible to act up to it, as to be ſtrictly *ſober* and *chaſte*, becauſe it is her care and deſire to be ſo.

This doctrine does not ſuppoſe, that we have no need of divine grace, or that it is in our own power to make our ſelves perfect. It only ſuppoſes, that through the want of a *ſincere* intention of pleaſing God in *all our actions*, we fall into ſuch irregularities of life, as by the *ordinary* means of grace, we ſhould have power to avoid.

And that we have not that perfection, which our preſent ſtate of grace makes us capable of, becauſe we don't ſo much as *intend* to have it

It only teaches us, that the reaſon why you ſee no *real* mortification, or ſelf-denial, no *eminent* charity, no *profound* humility, no *heavenly* affection, no *true* contempt of the world, no *Chriſtian* meekneſs, no *ſincere* zeal, no *eminent* piety in the *common lives* of Chriſtians, is this, becauſe they don't ſo much as *intend to be exact and exemplary* in theſe virtues.

CHAP. III.

Of the great danger, and folly of not intending *to be as eminent and exemplary, as we can, in the practice of all Chriſtian virtues.*

ALthough the goodneſs of God, and his rich mercies in Chriſt Jeſus are a ſufficient aſſurance to us, that he will be merciful to our unavoidable weakneſſes and infirmities, that is, to ſuch failings as are the effects of *ignorance* or *ſurprize*; yet we have no reaſon to expect the ſame mercy towards thoſe ſins which we have lived in, through a want of *intention* to avoid them.

For inſtance, the caſe of a *common ſwearer* who dies in that guilt, ſeems to have no title to the divine mercy, for this reaſon, becauſe he can no more plead any weakneſs, or infirmity in his excuſe, than the man that hid his *talent* in the earth, could plead his want of ſtrength to keep it out of the earth.

But now, if this be right reaſoning in the caſe of a *common ſwearer*, that his ſin is not to be reckon'd a *pardonable frailty*, becauſe he has no weakneſs to plead in its excuſe, why then do we not carry this way of reaſoning to its true extent? Why don't we as much condemn every other error of life, that has no more weakneſs to plead in its excuſe than common ſwearing?

For

For if this be ſo bad a thing, becauſe i might be avoided, if we did but ſincerely intend it, muſt not then all other erroneous ways of life be very guilty, if we live in them, not through weakneſs and inability, but becauſe we never ſincerely intended to avoid them?

For inſtance, you perhaps have made no progreſs in the moſt important chriſtian virtues, you have ſcarce gone half way in *humility* and *charity*; now if your failure in theſe duties is purely owing to your want of *intention* of performing them in any true degree, have you not then as little to plead for your ſelf, and are you not as much without all excuſe as the *common ſwearer?*

Why therefore, don't you preſs theſe things home upon your conſcience? Why do you not think it as dangerous for you to live in ſuch defects as are in your power to amend, as 'tis dangerous for a common ſwearer to live in the breach of that duty, which it is in his power to obſerve? Is not negligence, and a want of a ſincere intention, as blameable in one caſe, as in another?

You, it may be, are as far from *Chriſtian Perfection*, as the common ſwearer is from keeping the *third Commandment*; are you not therefore as much condemn'd by the doctrines of the Goſpel, as the ſwearer is by the third Commandment?

You perhaps, will ſay, that all People fall ſhort of the Perfection of the Goſpel, and there-

therefore you are content with your failings. But this is ſaying nothing to the purpoſe. For the queſtion is not whether Goſpel Perfection can be fully attain'd, but whether you come as near it as a ſincere intention, and careful diligence can carry you. Whether you are not in a much lower ſtate than you might be, if you ſincerely intended, and carefully labour'd to advance your ſelf in all Chriſtian virtues.

If you are as forward in the Chriſtian Life, as your beſt endeavours can make you, then you may juſtly hope that your *imperfections* will not be laid to your charge; but if your defects in *piety*, *humility*, and *charity*, are owing to your negligence, and want of *ſincere intention*, to be as eminent as you can in theſe virtues, then you leave your ſelf as much without excuſe, as he that lives in the ſin of ſwearing, through the want of a ſincere intention to depart from it.

The ſalvation of our ſouls is ſet forth in Scripture as a thing of difficulty, that requires *all our diligence*, that is to be *work'd out with fear and trembling*.

We are told, that *ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth into life, and few there be that find it. That many are called, but few are choſen.* And that many will miſs of their ſalvation, who ſeem to have taken *ſome pains* to obtain it. As in theſe words, *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many*

I ſay

I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Here our blessed Lord commands us to *strive* to enter in, because many will fail, who only *seek* to enter. By which we are plainly taught, that Religion is a state of *labour* and *striving*, and that many will fail of their salvation; not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take pains and care enough; they only *sought* but did not *strive* to enter in.

Every Christian, therefore, should as well examine his life by these *Doctrines*, as by the Commandments. For these Doctrines are as plain marks of our condition, as the Commandments are plain marks of our duty.

For if salvation is only given to those who *strive* for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider, whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the Commandments.

If my Religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship that are in fashion where I live; if it costs me no pains or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it, is it not great weakness to think that I am *striving to enter in at the strait gate?*

If I am seeking every thing that can delight my senses, and regale my appetites; spending my time and fortune in pleasures, in diver-

diverſions, and worldly enjoyments, a ſtranger to watchings, faſtings, prayers, and mortifications, how can it be ſaid that I am *working out my ſalvation with fear and trembling?*

If there is nothing in my life and converſation, that ſhews me to be different from *Jews* and *Heathens*; if I uſe the world, and worldly enjoyments, as the *generality* of people now do, and in all ages have done, why ſhould I think that I am amongſt *thoſe few*, who are walking in the *narrow way* to heaven?

And yet if the way is *narrow*, if none can walk in it but thoſe that *ſtrive*, is it not as neceſſary for me to conſider, whether the *way* I am in be narrow *enough*, or the labour I take to be a *ſufficient* ſtriving, as to conſider whether I ſufficiently obſerve the ſecond or third Commandment?

The ſum of this matter is this: From the above-mentioned, and many other paſſages of Scripture, it ſeems plain, that our ſalvation depends upon the *ſincerity* and *perfection* of our endeavours to obtain it.

Weak and imperfect men ſhall, notwithſtanding their frailties and defects, be receiv'd, as having pleas'd God, if they have done their *utmoſt* to pleaſe him.

The rewards of charity, piety, and humility, will be given to thoſe, whoſe lives have been a *careful labour* to exerciſe theſe virtues in as *high* a degree as they could.

We

We cannot offer to God the ſervice of *Angels*; we cannot obey him as man in a ſtate of perfection could; but *fallen men* can do their *beſt*, and this is the perfection that is requir'd of us; it is only the perfection of our *beſt* endeavours, a careful labour to be as perfect as we can.

But if we ſtop ſhort of this, for ought we know, we ſtop ſhort of the mercy of God, and leave our ſelves nothing to plead from the terms of the Goſpel. For God has there made no promiſes of mercy to the *ſlothful* and *negligent*. His mercy is only offer'd to our frail and imperfect, but beſt endeavours to practiſe all manner of righteouſneſs.

As the laws to angels is angelical righteouſneſs, as the law to perfect beings is ſtrict perfection, ſo the law to our imperfect natures is the *beſt* obedience that our frail nature is able to perform.

The meaſure of our love to God, ſeems in juſtice to be the meaſure of our love of every virtue. We are to love and practiſe it *with all our* heart, *with all our ſoul*, *with all our mind*, *and with all our ſtrength*. And when we ceaſe to live with this regard to virtue, we live below our nature, and inſtead of being able to plead our *infirmities*, we ſtand chargeable with *negligence*.

It is for this reaſon that we are exhorted, to work out our ſalvation with *fear* and *trembling*; becauſe unleſs our *heart* and *paſſions* are eagerly bent upon the work of our ſalvation;

unleſs *holy fears* animate our endeavours, and keep our conſciences ſtrict and tender about every part of our duty, conſtantly examining how we live, and how fit we are to die, we ſhall in all probability fall into a ſtate of negligence, and ſit down in ſuch a courſe of life, as will never carry us to the rewards of heaven.

And he that conſiders, that a juſt God can only make ſuch allowances as are ſuitable to his juſtice, that our works are all to be examin'd by fire, will find, that *fear* and *trembling* are proper tempers for thoſe, that are drawing near ſo great a trial.

And indeed there is no probability that any one ſhould do all the duty that is expected from him, or make that progreſs in piety, which the holineſs and juſtice of God requires of him; but he that is conſtantly afraid of falling ſhort of it.

Now this is not intended to poſſeſs people's minds with a ſcrupulous anxiety, and diſcontent in the ſervice of God, but to fill them with a juſt fear of living in ſloth and idleneſs, and in the neglect of ſuch virtues, as they will want at the day of Judgment.

It is to excite them to an earneſt examination of their lives, to ſuch zeal, and care and concern after chriſtian perfection, as they uſe in any matter that has gain'd their heart and affections.

It is only deſiring them to be ſo apprehenſive of their ſtate, ſo humble in the opinion

of

of themſelves, ſo earneſt after higher degrees of piety, and ſo fearful of falling ſhort of happineſs, as the great apoſtle St. *Paul* was, when he thus wrote to the *Philippians*.

Not as though I had already attain'd, either were already perfect,——but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before: I preſs toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. And then he adds, *let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.*

But now, if the Apoſtle thought it neceſſary for thoſe, who were in his ſtate of perfection, to be *thus minded*; that is, thus labouring, preſſing and aſpiring after ſome degrees of holineſs, to which they were not then arriv'd; ſurely it is much more neceſſary for us, who are born in the dregs of time, and labouring under great imperfections, *to be thus minded*; that is, thus earneſt and ſtriving after ſuch degrees of a holy and divine life, as we have not yet attain'd.

The beſt way for any one to know how much he ought to aſpire after holineſs, is to conſider, not how much will make his preſent life eaſy, but to aſk himſelf, how much he thinks will make him eaſy, at the hour of death.

Now any man that dares be ſo ſerious, as to put this queſtion to himſelf, will be forc'd to anſwer, that at death, every one will wiſh that

he had been as perfect as human nature can be.

Is not this therefore ſufficient to put us not only upon wiſhing, but labouring after all that perfection, which we ſhall then lament the want of? Is it not exceſſive folly to be content with ſuch a courſe of piety as we already know cannot content us, at a time when we ſhall ſo want it, as to have nothing elſe to comfort us? How can we carry a ſeverer condemnation againſt our ſelves, than to believe, that at the hour of death, we ſhall want the virtues of the *Saints*, and wiſh that we had been amongſt the firſt ſervants of God, and yet take no methods of arriving at their height of piety, whilſt we are alive?

Though this is an *abſurdity* that we can eaſily paſs over at preſent, whilſt the health of our bodies, the paſſions of our minds, the noiſe, and hurry, and pleaſures, and buſineſs of the world, lead us on with eyes that ſee not, and ears that hear not, yet at death, it will ſet it ſelf before us in a dreadful magnitude, it will haunt us like a diſmal Ghoſt, and our conſcience will never let us take our eyes from it.

We ſee in worldly matters, what a torment ſelf-condemnation is; and how hardly a man is able to forgive himſelf, when he has brought himſelf into any calamity or diſgrace, purely by his own folly. The affliction is made doubly tormenting; becauſe he is forc'd to charge it all upon himſelf, as his own act and deed, againſt

againſt the nature and reaſon of things, and contrary to the advice of all his friends.

Now by this we may in ſome degree gueſs, how terrible the pain of that ſelf-condemnation will be, when a man ſhall find himſelf in the miſeries of death, under the ſeverity of a ſelf-condemning conſcience; charging all his diſtreſs upon his own folly, and madneſs, againſt the ſenſe and reaſon of his own mind, againſt all the doctrines and precepts of religion, and contrary to all the inſtructions, calls and warnings, both of God and man.

Penitens was a buſy, notable tradeſman, and very proſperous in his dealings, but died in the *thirty-fifth* year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, ſome of his neighbours came one evening to ſee him; at which time, he ſpake thus to them.

I ſee, ſays he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you now have about me. You think how melancholy a caſe it is, to ſee ſo young a man, and in ſuch flouriſhing buſineſs, deliver'd up to death. And perhaps, had I viſited any of you in my condition, I ſhould have had the ſame thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have rais'd an eſtate.

Theſe things are now ſunk into ſuch mere *nothings*, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcaſe to be buried in the earth, and to find my ſelf either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally ſeparated from all light and peace, can any words ſufficiently expreſs the littleneſs of every thing elſe?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuſes us with the neglect and diſregard of theſe things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly ſtate, which is too *wiſe* and *buſy*, to be at leiſure for theſe reflexions?

When we conſider death as a miſery, we only think of it as a miſerable ſeparation from the enjoyments of this life. We ſeldom mourn over an old man that dies rich, but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progreſs of their fortune. You your ſelves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepar'd to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a proſperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wiſdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the ſillieſt children is ſo great as this?

For what is there miſerable or dreadful in death, but the conſequences of it? When a man is dead, what does any thing ſignify to him, but the ſtate he is then in?

Our

Our poor friend *Lepidus* dy'd, you know, as he was dreſſing himſelf for a *feaſt*; do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? *Feaſt*, and *buſineſs*, and *pleaſures*, and *enjoyments*, ſeem great things to us, whilſt we think of nothing elſe, but as ſoon as we add death to them, they all ſink into an equal littleneſs; and the ſoul that is ſeparated from the body, no more laments the loſs of *buſineſs*, than the loſing of a *feaſt*.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reaſon to grieve, that this happen'd to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a ſad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more *bargains*, or ſtood a little longer behind a *counter*?

And if I am to go amongſt loſt ſpirits, could there be any reaſon to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good Angels were ready to receive my ſoul could it be any grief to me, that I was dying upon a *poor bed* in a *garret*?

And if God has deliver'd me up to evil ſpirits, to be dragg'd by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of ſtate?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different ſtates of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatneſs or meanneſs, ſignify no more to you,

than whether you die in a *poor* or *ſtately* apartment.

The greatneſs of thoſe things which follow death, makes all that goes before it ſink into nothing.

Now that *judgment* is the next thing that I look for, and everlaſting happineſs or miſery is come ſo near me, all the enjoyments and proſperities of life ſeem as vain and inſignificant, and to have no more to do with my happineſs than the cloaths that I wore before I could ſpeak.

But, my friends, how am I ſurpriz'd, that I have not always had theſe thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the neceſſities of piety, but what I might have as eaſily and fully ſeen in any part of my life?

What a ſtrange thing is it, that a little *health*, or the poor buſineſs of a *ſhop*, ſhould keep us ſo ſenſeleſs of theſe great things, that are coming ſo faſt upon us!

Juſt as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with my ſelf, what numbers of ſouls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, ſurpriz'd with a ſummons to the other world; ſome taken from their *ſhops* and *farms*, others from their *ſports* and *pleaſures*, theſe at *ſuits of Law*, thoſe at *Gaming-tables*, ſome on the *road*, others at their own *fire-ſides*, and all ſeiz'd at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frighted at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity

nity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonish'd at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quench'd, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and he bitter pains of eternal death.

Oh my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ your selves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these Apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God, one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You perhaps, when you consider that I have liv'd free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death.

But alas! what a poor thing is it, to have liv'd only free from *murder*, *theft* and *adultery*, which is all that I can say of my self.

You

You know indeed, that I have never been reckon'd a *ſot*, but you are at the ſame time witneſſes, and have been frequent companions of my *intemperance*, *ſenſuality*, and great *indulgence*. And if I am now going to a Judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but *good works*, I may well be concern'd, that tho' I am no *ſot*, yet I have no *Chriſtian ſobriety* to plead for me.

It is true, I have liv'd in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worſhip and ſervice on *Sundays*, when I was neither too *idle*, or not otherwiſe diſpos'd of by my *buſineſs* and *pleaſures*. But then, my conformity to the publick worſhip has been rather a thing of courſe, than any real intention of doing that, which the ſervice of the Church ſuppoſes; had it not been ſo, I had been oftner at Church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now ſurprizes me above all wonders, is this, that I never had ſo much as a *general intention* of living up to the piety of the Goſpel. This never ſo much as enter'd into my head or myheart. I never once in my life conſider'd, whether I was living as the laws of Religion direct, or whether my way of life was ſuch, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And can it be thought, that I have kept the Goſpel terms of ſalvation, without ever ſo much as *intending* in any ſerious and deliberate

berate manner either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought, that I have pleaſed God with ſuch a life as he requires, tho' I have liv'd without ever conſidering, what he requires, or how much I have perform'd? How eaſy a thing would ſalvation be, if it could fall into my careleſs hands, who have never had ſo much ſerious thoughts about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

In the buſineſs of life I have uſed prudence and reflection, I have done every thing by rules and methods. I have been glad to converſe with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reaſons why ſome fail, and others ſucceed in any buſineſs. I have taken no ſtep in trade but with great care and caution, conſidering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of buſineſs, and have ſtudy'd all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reaſon that I have brought none of theſe tempers to Religion? What is the reaſon that I, who have ſo often talk'd of the neceſſity of *rules* and *methods*, and *diligence* in worldly buſineſs, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of Piety?

Do you think any thing can aſtoniſh, and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man muſt feel, when his conſcience

ſcience lays all this folly to his charge, when it ſhall ſhew him how regular, exact, and wiſe he has been in ſmall matters, that are paſſed away like a dream, and how ſtupid and ſenſeleſs he has liv'd, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of ſuch eternal moment, as no heart can ſufficiently conceive them!

Had I only my *frailties* and *imperfections* to lament, at this time, I ſhould lye here humbly truſting in the mercies of God. But alas! how can I call a general diſregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a *frailty* or *imperfection*; when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a courſe of piety, as in the buſineſs of my *trade*.

I could have call'd in as many helps, have practiſed as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my ſhop, had I but ſo *intended* and *deſir'd* it.

Oh my friends! a careleſs life, unconcern'd and unattentive to the duties of Religion, is ſo without all excuſe, ſo unworthy of the mercy of God, ſuch a ſhame to the ſenſe and reaſon of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater puniſhment, than for a man to be thrown into the ſtate that I am in, to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth ſtopp'd by a *convulſion*, which never ſuffer'd him to ſpeak any more. He lay convuls'd about

about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghoſt.

Now if every *reader* would imagine this *Penitens* to have been ſome particular acquaintance or relation of his, and fancy that he ſaw and heard all that is here deſcrib'd, that he ſtood by his bed-ſide when his poor friend lay in ſuch diſtreſs and agony, lamenting the folly of his paſt life, it would in all probability, teach him ſuch wiſdom as never enter'd into his heart before. If to this, he ſhould conſider how often he himſelf might have been ſurprized in the ſame ſtate of negligence, and made an example to the reſt of the world, this double reflection, both upon the *diſtreſs* of his friend, and the *goodneſs* of that God, who had preſerv'd him from it, would in all likelihood ſoften his heart into holy tempers, and make him turn the remainder of his life into a regular courſe of piety.

This therefore being ſo uſeful a meditation, I ſhall here leave the reader, as, I hope, ſeriouſly engag'd in it.

CHAP-

CHAP. IV.

We can please God in no state, or employment of life, but by intending *and* devoting *it all to his honour and glory.*

HAving in the first Chapter stated the general nature of Devotion, and shewn, that it implies not any *form of Prayer*, but a certain form of life, that is offer'd to God not at any particular *times*, or *places*, but every where and in every thing, I shall now descend to some particulars, and shew how we are to devote our *labour* and *employment*, our *time* and *fortunes* unto God.

As a good Christian should consider every place as holy, because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offer'd unto God.

The profession of a *Clergyman*, is an holy profession, because it is a ministration in *holy things*, an attendance at the *Altar*. But worldly business is to be made holy unto the Lord, by being done as a service to him, and in conformity to his divine will.

For as all men and all things in the World, as truly belong unto God, as any *places*, *things*, or *persons* that are devoted to divine service, so all things are to be *used*, and all persons are to

to *act* in their ſeveral ſtates and employments for the Glory of God.

Men of worldly buſineſs therefore muſt not look upon themſelves as at liberty to live to themſelves, to ſacrifice to their own *humours* and *tempers*, becauſe their employment is of a worldly nature. But they muſt conſider, that as the world and all worldly profeſſions, as truly belong to God, as *perſons* and *things* that are devoted to the *Altar*, ſo it is as much the duty of men in worldly buſineſs to live wholly unto God, as 'tis the duty of thoſe, who are devoted to divine ſervice.

As the whole world is God's, ſo the whole world is to act for God. As all men have the ſame *relation* to God, as all men have all their *powers* and *faculties* from God, ſo all men are oblig'd to act for God with all their powers and faculties.

As all things are God's, ſo all things are to be uſed and regarded as the things of God. For *men* to abuſe things on *earth*, and live to themſelves, is the ſame rebellion againſt God, as for *Angels* to abuſe things in *Heaven*; becauſe God is juſt the ſame Lord of all on earth, as he is the Lord of all in Heaven.

Things may, and muſt *differ* in their *uſe*, but yet they are all to be uſed according to the will of God.

Men may, and muſt differ in their *employments*, but yet they muſt all act for the ſame ends, as dutiful ſervants of God, in the right

right and pious performance of their ſeveral callings.

Clergymen muſt live wholly unto God in one *particular* way, that is, in the exerciſe of *Holy offices*, in the miniſtration of *Prayers* and *Sacraments*, and a zealous diſtribution of ſpiritual goods.

But men of other employments are in their *particular* ways as much oblig'd to act as the ſervants of God, and live holy unto him in their ſeveral callings.

This is the only difference between Clergymen, and People of other callings.

When it can be ſhewn, that men might be vain, covetous, ſenſual, worldly minded, or proud in the exerciſe of their worldly buſineſs, then it will be allowable for *Clergymen* to indulge the ſame tempers in their ſacred profeſſion. For tho' theſe tempers are moſt odious and moſt criminal in *Clergymen*, who beſides their baptiſmal vow, have a ſecond time devoted themſelves to God, to be his ſervants, not in the *common offices* of human life, but in the *ſpiritual* ſervice of the moſt *holy ſacred* things; and who are therefore to keep themſelves as ſeparate and different from the *common life* of other men, as a *Church* or an *Altar* is to be kept ſeparate from houſes, and tables of common uſe: Yet as all Chriſtians are by their baptiſm *devoted* to God, and made profeſſors of holineſs, ſo are they all in their ſeveral callings to live as holy and heavenly perſons; doing every thing in their *common* life only

only in such a manner, as it may be received by God, as a service done to him. For things spiritual and temporal, sacred and common, must, like *men* and *angels*, like *heaven* and *earth*, all conspire in the Glory of God.

As there is but one *God* and *Father of us all*, whose Glory gives light and life to every thing that lives; whose presence fills all places, whose power supports all beings, whose providence ruleth all Events; so every thing that lives, whether in *heaven* or *earth*, whether they be *thrones* or *principalities*, *men* or *angels*, they must all with one spirit, live *wholly* to the praise and glory of this one God and Father of them all. *Angels* as *angels*, in their heavenly ministrations, but *men* as men, *women* as women, *bishops* as bishops, *priests* as priests, and *deacons* as deacons; some with things *spiritual*, and some with things *temporal*, offering to God the daily sacrifice of a reasonable life, wise actions, purity of heart, and heavenly affections.

This is the *common business* of all persons in this world. It is not left to any *women* in the world to trifle away their time in the follies and impertinencies of a *fashionable life*, nor to any *men* to resign themselves up to worldly *cares* and *concerns*; it is not left to the *rich*, to gratify their passions in the *indulgencies* and *pride* of life, nor to the *poor*, to vex and torment their hearts with the *poverty* of their state; but men and women, rich and poor, must with *bishops* and *priests*, walk before

God in the ſame wiſe and holy ſpirit, in the ſame denial of all vain tempers, and in the ſame diſcipline and care of their ſouls; not only becauſe they have all the ſame rational nature, and are ſervants of the ſame God, but becauſe they *all want* the ſame holineſs to make them fit for the ſame happineſs, to which they are all called. It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary for all chriſtians, whether *men* or *women* to conſider themſelves, as perſons that are *devoted* to holineſs; and ſo order their *common ways of life* by ſuch rules of reaſon and piety, as may turn it into *continual ſervice* unto almighty God.

Now to make our *labour* or *employment* an acceptable ſervice unto God, we muſt carry it on with the ſame *ſpirit*, and *temper*, that is required in giving of *alms*, or any work of *piety*. For, if *whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do, we muſt do all to the glory of God*; if *we are to uſe this world as if we uſed it not*; if we are to *preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God*; if *we are to live by faith, and not by ſight*, and to *have our converſation in heaven*; then it is neceſſary, that the *common* way of our life in every ſtate be made to glorify God by *ſuch tempers*, as make our prayers and adorations acceptable to him. For if we are worldly or earthly-minded in our *employments*, if they are carried on with *vain* deſires, and *covetous* tempers, only to ſatisfy ourſelves, we can no more be

1 Cor. x. 31.

Rom. xii. 7.

ſaid

ſaid to live to the glory of God, than *gluttons* and *drunkards* can be ſaid, to eat and drink to the glory of God.

As the glory of God is *one* and the *ſame* thing, ſo whatever we do ſuitable to it, muſt be done with *one* and the *ſame* ſpirit. That ſame ſtate and temper of mind, which makes our *alms* and *devotions* acceptable, muſt alſo make our *labour*, or *employment* a proper offering unto God. If a man labours to be *rich*, and purſues his buſineſs, that he may raiſe himſelf to a ſtate of *figure* and *glory* in the world, he is no longer ſerving God in his employment; he is acting under other *maſters*, and has no more title to a reward from God, than he that gives *alms*, that he may be *ſeen*, or *prays*, that he may be *heard* of men. For vain and earthly deſires are no more allowable in our *employments*, than in our *alms* and *devotions*. For theſe tempers of worldly pride, and vain glory, are not only evil, when they mix with our good works; but they have the ſame evil nature, and make us odious to God, when they enter into the common buſineſs of our employment. If it were allowable to indulge *covetous* or *vain* paſſions in our worldly *employments*, it would then be allowable to be vain-glorious in our *devotions*. But as our *alms*, and *devotions* are not an acceptable ſervice, but when they proceed from a heart *truly devoted* to God, ſo our common employment cannot be reckon'd a ſervice to him,

but when it is perform'd with the *ſame* temper and piety of heart.

Moſt of the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all thoſe that are ſo, may be made a ſubſtantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only *ſo far*, and for ſuch *ends*, as are ſuitable to *beings*, that are to live *above* the world, all the time that they live in the world. This is the *only meaſure* of our application to any worldly buſineſs, let it be what it will, where it will, it muſt have no more of our *hands*, our *hearts*, or our *time*, than is conſiſtent with an hearty, daily, careful preparation of our ſelves for another life. For as all chriſtians, as ſuch, have renounced this world, to prepare themſelves by *daily* devotion, and *univerſal* holineſs, for an eternal ſtate of quite another nature, they muſt look upon worldly employments, as upon *worldly wants*, and *bodily infirmities*; things not to be deſir'd, but only to be endur'd and ſuffer'd, till death and the reſurrection has carry'd us to an eternal ſtate of real happineſs.

Now he that does not look at the things of this life in this *degree* of littleneſs, cannot be ſaid, either to feel or believe the *greateſt* truths of chriſtianity. For if he thinks any thing great or important in human buſineſs, can he be ſaid, to feel or believe thoſe Scriptures which repreſent this life, and the greateſt things of life, as *bubbles*, *vapours*, *dreams* and *ſhadows*?

If

If he thinks *figure*, and *ſhew*, and worldly *glory*, to be any *proper* happineſs of a chriſtian, how can he be ſaid to feel or believe this doctrine, *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company, and ſhall reproach you, and caſt out your name as evil for the Son of man's ſake?* For ſurely, if there was any real happineſs in *figure* and *ſhew*, and *worldly glory*; if theſe things deſerved our thoughts and care, it could not be matter of the *higheſt joy*, when we are torn from them by *perſecutions* and *ſufferings?* If, therefore, a man will ſo live, as to ſhew, that he feels and believes the moſt *fundamental* doctrines of Chriſtianity, he muſt live *above* the world; this is the *temper* that muſt enable him to do the buſineſs of life, and yet live *wholly* unto God, and to go through ſome *worldly* employment with a *heavenly* mind. And it is as neceſſary, that people live in their employments with this *temper*, as it is neceſſary, that their employment it ſelf be *lawful*.

The *huſbandman* that tilleth the ground, is employ'd in an honeſt buſineſs, that is neceſſary in life, and very capable of being made an *acceptable ſervice* unto God. But if he labours and toils, not to ſerve any reaſonable ends of life, but in order to have his *plow* made of *ſilver*, and to have his *horſes* harneſſed in *gold*, the honeſty of his employment is loſt as to him, and his labour becomes his *folly*.

A *tradeſman*, may juſtly think, that it is agreeable to the will of God, for him to ſell ſuch things as are *innocent* and *uſeful* in life, ſuch as help both himſelf, and others, to a reaſonable ſupport, and enable them to aſſiſt thoſe that want to be aſſiſted. But if inſtead of this he trades only with regard to *himſelf*, without any other rule than that of his own *temper*, if it be his chief end in it to grow *rich*, that he may live in *figure* and *indulgence*, and be able to retire from buſineſs to *idleneſs* and *luxury*, his trade, as to him, loſes all its *innocency*, and is ſo far from being an acceptable ſervice to God, that it is only a more plauſible courſe of *covetouſneſs*, *ſelf-love* and *ambition*. For ſuch a one turns the neceſſities of employment into pride and covetouſneſs, juſt as the *ſot* and *epicure* turn the neceſſities of eating and drinking, into *gluttony* and *drunkenneſs*. Now he that is up early and late, that ſweats and labours for theſe ends, that he may be ſome time or other rich, and live in *pleaſure* and *indulgence*, lives no more to the glory of God, than he that *plays* and *games* for the ſame ends. For though there is a great difference between *trading* and *gaming*, yet moſt of that difference is loſt, when men once trade with the *ſame deſires* and *tempers*, and for the ſame *ends*, that others game. *Charity* and *fine dreſſing*, are things very different; but if men give *alms* for the ſame reaſons that others *dreſs fine*, only to be *ſeen* and *admir'd*, charity is then but like the vanity of *fine cloaths*.

cloaths. In like manner, if the ſame motives make ſome people painful and induſtrious in their *trades*, which make others conſtant at *gaming*, ſuch pains is but like the pains of gaming.

Calidus has traded above thirty years in the greateſt city of the kingdom: he has been ſo many years conſtantly increaſing his *trade* and his *fortune*. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of buſineſs; and though he *eats* and *drinks* very heartily, yet every *meal* ſeems to be in a hurry, and he would ſay *grace* if he *had time*. *Calidus* ends every day at the *tavern*, but has not leiſure to be there till near nine a clock. He is always forc'd to drink a good *hearty glaſs*, to drive thoughts of buſineſs out of his head, and make his ſpirits *drowſy* enough for ſleep. He does buſineſs all the time that he is riſing, and has ſettled ſeveral matters, before he can get to his *compting-room*. His prayers are a ſhort *ejaculation* or two, which he never miſſes in *ſtormy tempeſtuous* weather, becauſe he has always ſomething or other at *Sea*. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleaſure, that he has been in this *hurry* for ſo many years, and that it muſt have kill'd him long ago, but that it has been a *rule* with him, to get out of the town every *Saturday*, and make the *Sunday* a day of *quiet* and good *refreſhment* in the country.

He is now ſo rich, that he would leave off his buſineſs, and amuſe his *old age* with building and furniſhing a fine houſe in the country,

but that he ia afraid he ſhould grow *melancholy*, if he was to quit his buſineſs. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man, that has been us'd to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of Religion happen at any time to *ſteal* into his head, *Calidus*, contents himſelf with thinking, that he never was a friend to *hereticks* and *infidels*, that he has always been civil to the *Miniſter* of his pariſh, and very often given ſomething to the *charity ſchools*.

Now this way of life is at ſuch a *diſtance* from all the doctrines and diſcipline of chriſtianity, that no one can live in it through *ignorance* or *frailty*. *Calidus* can no more imagine that *he is born again of the ſpirit*; that he is *in Chriſt a new creature*; that he lives *here as a ſtranger and pilgrim, ſetting his affections upon things above, and laying up treaſures in heaven*. He can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an *Apoſtle*, working *Miracles*, and preaching the *Goſpel*.

St. John iii.

1 Pet. ii. 11.

Colloſ. iii. 1.

It muſt alſo be own'd, that the *generality* of trading people, eſpecially in *great towns*, are too much like *Calidus*. You ſee them all the week bury'd in buſineſs, unable to think of any thing elſe; and then ſpending the *Sunday* in idleneſs and refreſhment, in wandring into the country, in ſuch viſits and jovial meetings, as make it often the worſt day of the week.

Now

Now they do not live thus, becauſe they cannot ſupport themſelves with *leſs care* and application to buſineſs; but they live thus becauſe they want to grow *rich* in their trades, and to maintain their families in ſome ſuch *figure* and degree of *finery*, as a *reaſonable Chriſtian* life has no occaſion for. Take away but this *temper*, and then people of *all trades*, will find themſelves at leiſure to live every day like Chriſtians, to be careful of every duty of the Goſpel, to live in a viſible courſe of Religion, and be every day ſtrict obſervers both of private and publick Prayer.

Now the only way to do this, is for people to conſider their trade as ſomething, that they are oblig'd to *devote* to the glory of God, ſomething that they are to do only in ſuch a manner, as that they may make it a duty to him. Nothing can be right in *buſineſs*, that is not under theſe rules.——The Apoſtle commands ſervants, *to be obedient to their maſters in ſingleneſs of heart as unto Chriſt. Not with eye-ſervice as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will doing ſervice as unto the Lord, and not to men,* Epheſ. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22 23.

This paſſage ſufficiently ſhews, that all Chriſtians are to live wholly unto God in every ſtate and condition, doing the work of their *common calling* in ſuch a manner, and for ſuch ends, as to make it a part of their *devotion* or *ſervice* to God. For certainly if *poor ſlaves* are

are not to comply with their buſineſs as *men-pleaſers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in all their actions, and ſerve in *ſingleneſs* of *heart*, as unto the Lord, ſurely men of other *employments* and *conditions* muſt be as much obliged to go thro' their buſineſs with the ſame *ſingleneſs of heart*; not as pleaſing the vanity of their own minds, not as gratifying their own ſelfiſh, worldly paſſions, but as the ſervants of God in all that they have to do. For ſurely no one will ſay, that a ſlave is to devote his ſtate of life unto God, and make the will of God, the *ſole rule* and end of his ſervice, but that a *tradeſman* need not act with the ſame ſpirit of devotion in his buſineſs. For this is as abſurd, as to make it neceſſary for one man to be more *juſt* or *faithful* than another.

It is therefore abſolutely certain, that no Chriſtian is to enter *any farther* into buſineſs, nor for any *other ends*, than ſuch as he can in *ſingleneſs* of heart offer unto God, as a *reaſonable* ſervice. For the Son of God has redeem'd us for this *only end*, that we ſhould by a life of *reaſon* and *piety* live to the glory of God; this is the only *rule* and *meaſure* for every order and ſtate of life. With this *rule*, the moſt *lawful* employment, becomes a *ſinful* ſtate of life.

Take away this from the life of a *Clergyman*, and his holy profeſſion ſerves only to expoſe him to a *greater damnation*. Take away this from *tradeſmen*, and ſhops are but ſo many houſes of greedineſs and filthy lucre. Take away

away this from *gentlemen*, and the course of their life becomes a course of sensuality, pride and wantonness. Take away this rule from our *tables*, and all falls into gluttony and drunkenness. Take away this measure from our *dress* and *habits*, and all is turn'd into such *paint*, and *glitter*, and ridiculous ornaments as are a *real* shame to the wearer. Take away this from the use of our *fortunes* and you will find people sparing in nothing but charity. Take away this from our *diversions*, and you will find no sports too silly, nor any entertainments too vain and corrupt to be the pleasure of Christians.

If therefore we desire to live unto God, it is necessary to bring our *whole life* under this law, to make his glory the sole *rule* and *measure* of our acting in every employment of life. For there is no other *true devotion*, but this of living devoted to God in the common business of our lives.

So that men must not content themselves with the *lawfulness* of their employments, but must consider whether they *use* them, as they are to use *every thing*, as *strangers* and *pilgrims*, that are baptiz'd into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that are to follow him in a *wise and heavenly* course of life, in the mortification of all worldly desires, and in purifying and preparing their souls for the blessed enjoyment of God.

Col. iii. 1. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Ephes. v. 26, 27

For

For to be vain, or proud, or covetous, or ambitious in the *common courſe* of our buſineſs, is as contrary to theſe holy tempers of Chriſtianity, as cheating and diſhoneſty.

If a *glutton* was to ſay in excuſe of his gluttony, that he only eats ſuch things as it is *lawful* to eat, he would make as good an excuſe for himſelf, as the greedy, covetous, ambitious tradeſman, that ſhould ſay, he only deals in lawful buſineſs. For as a Chriſtian is not only requir'd to be honeſt, but to be of a Chriſtian *ſpirit*, and make his life an exerciſe of *humility*, *repentance* and *heavenly* affection, ſo all tempers that are contrary to theſe, are as contrary to Chriſtianity, as *cheating* is contrary to *honeſty*.

So that the matter plainly comes to this, all irregular tempers in *trade* and *buſineſs* are but like irregular tempers in *eating* and *drinking*.

Proud views, and *vain deſires* in our worldly employments, are as truly vices and corruptions, as *hypocriſy* in prayer, or *vanity* in alms. And there can be no reaſon given, why vanity in our *alms*, ſhould make us odious to God, but what will prove any other kind of pride to be *equally* odious. He that labours and toils in a *calling*, that he may make a figure in the world, and draw the eyes of People upon the ſplendor of his condition, it as far from the pious humility of a Chriſtian, as he that gives *alms* that he may be ſeen of men. For the reaſon, why pride and vanity in our *prayers* and *alms* renders them an unacceptable

ſervice

ſervice to God, is not becauſe there is any thing *particular* in prayers and alms, that cannot allow of pride, but becauſe pride is in no reſpect, nor in any thing, *made for man*; it deſtroys the *piety* of our prayers and alms, becauſe it deſtroys the piety of *every thing* that it touches, and renders every action that it governs, incapable of being offer'd unto God.

So that if we could ſo *divide* our ſelves, as to be *humble* in ſome reſpects, and proud in others, ſuch humility would be of no ſervice to us, becauſe God requires us as truly to be humble in *all* our *actions* and deſigns, as to be true and honeſt in all our actions and deſigns.

And as a man is not honeſt and true, becauſe he is ſo to a great *many* People, or upon *ſeveral* occaſions, but becauſe truth and honeſty is the *meaſure* of all his dealings with every body; ſo the caſe is the ſame in humility, or any other temper, it muſt be the general ruling habit of our minds, and extend itſelf to all our actions and deſigns, before it can be imputed to us.

We indeed ſometimes talk, as if a man might be humble in ſome things, and proud in others; humble in his *dreſs*, but proud of his *learning*; humble in his *perſon*, but proud in his *views* and *deſigns*. But tho' this may paſs in common diſcourſe, where few things are ſaid according to *ſtrict* truth, it cannot be allow'd when we examine into the nature of our actions.

It

It is very poſſible for a man that lives by cheating, to be very punctual in *paying* for what he buys; but then every one is aſſur'd, that he does not do ſo, out of any principle of *true* honeſty.

In like manner it is very poſſible for a man, that is proud of his *eſtate*, ambitious in his *views*, or vain of his *learning*, to diſregard his *dreſs*, and *perſon*, in ſuch a manner as a truly humble man would do; but to ſuppoſe that he does ſo out of a true principle of religious humility, is full as abſurd, as to ſuppoſe that a *cheat* pays for what he buys, out of a principle of religious honeſty.

As therefore all kinds of diſhoneſty deſtroy our pretences to an *honeſt principle* of mind, ſo all kinds of pride deſtroy our pretences to an *humble ſpirit*.

No one wonders that thoſe *prayers*, and *alms*, which proceed from pride and oſtentation are odious to God; but yet it is as eaſy to ſhew, that pride is as pardonable there as any where elſe.

If we could ſuppoſe, that God rejects pride in our *prayers* and *alms*, but bears with pride in our *dreſs*, our *perſons*, or *eſtates*, it would be the ſame thing as to ſuppoſe that God condemns falſhood in ſome actions, but allows it in others. For pride in one thing differs from pride in another thing, as the robbing of one man differs from the robbing of another.

Again,

Again, if pride and oſtentation is ſo odious, that it deſtroys the *merit* and *worth* of the moſt reaſonable actions, ſurely it muſt be equally odious in thoſe actions, which are only founded in the *weakneſs* and *infirmity* of our nature. As thus, *alms* are commanded by God, as excellent in themſelves, as true inſtances of a divine temper, but *cloaths* are only allow'd to cover our ſhame; ſurely therefore it muſt at leaſt be as odious a degree of pride, to be vain in our *cloaths*, as to be vain in our *alms*.

Again, we are *commanded to pray without ceaſing*, as a means of rendering our ſouls more exalted and divine, but we are forbidden *to lay up treaſures upon earth*; and can we think that it is not as bad, to be vain of thoſe *treaſures*, which we are *forbidden* to lay up, as to be vain of thoſe *prayers*, which we are *commanded* to make.

Women are requir'd to have their *heads cover'd*, and to *adorn* themſelves with *ſhamefacedneſs*; if therefore they are *vain* in thoſe things which are expreſly forbiden, if they patch and paint that part, which can only be adorn'd by *ſhamefacedneſs*, ſurely they have as much to repent of for ſuch a pride, as they have, whoſe pride is the motive to their prayers and charity. This muſt be granted, unleſs we will ſay, that it is more *pardonable* to glory in our *ſhame*, than to glory in our *virtue*.

1 Cor. xi. 13.
1 Tim. ii. 9.

All

All theſe inſtances are only to ſhew us the great neceſſity of ſuch a regular and uniform piety, as extends it ſelf to all the actions of our common life.

That we muſt *eat* and *drink*, and *dreſs* and *diſcourſe* according to the ſobriety of the *Chriſtian* ſpirit, engage in no employments but ſuch as we can truly devote unto God, nor purſue them any farther, than ſo far as conduces to the reaſonable ends of a holy devout life.

That we muſt be *honeſt*, not only on *particular* occaſions, and in *ſuch* inſtances as are *applauded* in the world, *eaſy* to be perform'd and free from *danger*, or *loſs*, but from ſuch a *living principle* of juſtice, as makes us love truth and integrity in *all its inſtances*, follow it through all dangers, and againſt all oppoſition; as knowing that the more we pay for any truth, the better is our *bargain*, and that then our integrity becomes a *pearl*, when we have parted with all to keep it.

That we muſt be *humble*, not only in ſuch inſtances as are *expected* in the world, or *ſuitable* to our tempers, or confin'd to particular occaſions, but in ſuch an humility of ſpirit, as renders us meek and lowly in the *whole courſe* of our lives, as ſhews it ſelf in our *dreſs*, our *perſon*, our *converſation*, our *enjoyment* of the world, the *tranquility* of our minds, *patience* under injuries, *ſubmiſſion* to ſuperiors, and *condeſcenſions* to thoſe that are below us, and in all the outward actions of our lives.

That

That we must devote, not only *times* and *places* to prayer, but be every-where in the *spirit* of devotion, with hearts always set towards heaven, looking up to God in all our actions, and doing every thing as his servants, living in the world as in a holy temple of God, and always worshiping him, though not with our lips, yet with the *thankfulness* of our hearts, the *holiness* of our actions, and the *pious* and *charitable* use of all his gifts. That we must not only send up petitions and thoughts now and then to heaven, but must go through all our worldly business with an *heavenly* spirit, as members of Christ's mystical body, that with new *hearts*, and new *minds*, are to turn an earthly life into a preparation for a life of greatness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Now the only way to arrive at this piety of spirit, is to bring all your actions to the *same rule* as your *devotions* and *alms*. You very well know what it is, that makes the *piety* of your alms or devotions; now the same rules, the same regard to God, must render every thing else that you do, a fit and acceptable service unto God.

Enough, I hope, has been said, to shew you the necessity of thus introducing Religion into *all the actions* of your common life, and of living and acting with the same regard to God in all that you do, as in your prayers and alms.

Eating is one of the loweſt actions of our lives, it is common to us with mere *animals*, yet we ſee that the piety of all ages of the world, has turned this *ordinary* action of an animal life, into a *piety* to God, by making *every meal* to begin and end with devotion.

We ſee *yet* ſome *remains* of this cuſtom in moſt chriſtian families; ſome ſuch *little formality*, as ſhews you, that people *us'd* to call upon God at the beginning and end of their meals. But, indeed, it is now generally ſo perform'd, as to look more like a *mockery* upon devotion, than any *ſolemn* application of the mind unto God. In one houſe you may perhaps ſee the *head* of the family juſt pulling off his *hat*; in another half getting up from his *ſeat*; another ſhall, it may be, proceed ſo far, as to make as if he ſaid *ſomething*; but, however, theſe *little attempts* are the remains of ſome devotion that was formerly us'd at ſuch times, and are proofs that religion has formerly belong'd to this part of *common life*.

But to ſuch a paſs are we now come, that though the cuſtom is yet preſerv'd, yet we can hardly *bear* with him, that ſeems to perform it with any degree of *ſerioufneſs*, and look upon it as a ſign of a *fanatical* temper, if a man has not done it as ſoon as he begins.

I would not be thought to plead for the neceſſity of *long prayers* at theſe times; but thus much I think may be ſaid, that if prayer is *proper* at theſe times, we ought to oblige

oblige our ſelves to uſe ſuch a *form* of words, as ſhould ſhew, that we *ſolemnly* appeal to God for *ſuch* graces and bleſſings as are then proper to the occaſion. Otherwiſe the mock ceremony, inſtead of bleſſing our victuals, does but accuſtom us to trifle with devotion, and give us a habit of being unaffected with our prayers.

If every *head* of a family was, at the return of *every meal*, to oblige himſelf to make a *ſolemn adoration* of God, in ſuch a decent manner, as becomes a devout mind, it would be very likely to teach him, that *ſwearing*, *ſenſuality*, *gluttony*, and *looſe* diſcourſe, were very improper at thoſe meals, which were to *begin* and *end* with devotion.

And if in theſe days of general corruption, this part of devotion is fallen into a *mock ceremony*, it muſt be imputed to this cauſe, that *ſenſuality* and *intemperance* have got too great a power over us, to ſuffer us to add any devotion to our meals. But thus much muſt be ſaid, that when we are as pious as *Jews* and *Heathens* of all ages have been, we ſhall think it proper to pray at the beginning and end of our meals.

I have appeal'd to this pious cuſtom of all ages of the world, as a proof of the reaſonableneſs of the doctrine of this and the foregoing chapters; that is, as a proof that religion is to be the *rule* and *meaſure* of all the actions of *ordinary* life. For ſurely, if we are not to *eat*, but under ſuch rules of devotion,

it muſt plainly appear, that whatever elſe we do, muſt in its proper way, be done with the ſame regard to the glory of God, and agreeably to the principles of a *devout* and *pious* mind.

CHAP. V.

Perſons that are free from the neceſſity of labour and employments, are to conſider themſelves as devoted to God in a higher degree.

GReat part of the world are free from the neceſſities of labour and employments, and have their *time* and *fortunes* in their own diſpoſal.

But as no one is to live in his *employment* according to his own humour, or for ſuch ends as pleaſe his own fancy, but is to do all his buſineſs in ſuch a manner, as to make it a ſervice unto God; ſo thoſe who have no particular employment, are ſo far from being left at greater liberty to live to themſelves, to purſue their own humours, and ſpend their time and fortunes as they pleaſe, that they are under greater obligations of living wholly unto God in all their actions.

The *freedom* of their ſtate lays them under a greater *neceſſity* of always chuſing and doing the *beſt* things.

They

They are thoſe, of whom *much will be requir'd*, becauſe *much is given unto them.*

A *ſlave* can only live unto God in one *particular* way; that is, by religious patience and ſubmiſſion in his ſtate of ſlavery.

But all ways of holy living, all inſtances, and all kinds of virtue, lie open to thoſe, who are maſters of themſelves, their time and their fortune.

It is as much the duty, therefore, of ſuch perſons, to make a wiſe uſe of their liberty, to devote themſelves, to all kinds of virtue, to aſpire after every thing that is holy and pious, to endeavour to be eminent in all good works, and to pleaſe God in the higheſt and moſt perfect manner; it is as much their duty to be thus wiſe in the conduct of themſelves, and thus evtenſive in their endeavours after holineſs, as it is the duty of a *ſlave* to be *reſign'd* unto God in his ſtate of ſlavery.

You are no *labourer*, or *tradeſman*, you are neither *merchant* nor *ſoldier*; conſider your ſelf, therefore, as plac'd in a ſtate, in ſome degree like that of *good angels*, who are ſent into the world as *miniſtring ſpirits*, for the general good of mankind, to *aſſiſt*, *protect* and *miniſter* for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation.

For the more you are free from the *common* neceſſities of *men*, the more you are to imitate the *higher* perfections of *angels*.

Had you, *Serena*, been oblig'd by the neceſſities of life, to waſh cloaths for your main-

tenance, or to wait upon some *mistress*, that demanded all your *labour*, it would then be your duty to serve and glorify God, by such *humility*, *obedience*, and *faithfulness*, as might adorn that state of life.

It would then be recommended to your care, to improve that *one talent* to its greatest height. That when the time came, that mankind were to be rewarded for their labours by the great Judge of quick and dead, you might be receiv'd with a *well done* good and *faithful servant*, *enter thou into the joy of the Lord.*

St. Mat. xxv.

But as God has given you *five talents*, as he has placed you above the necessities of life, as he has left you in the hands of your self, in the happy liberty of chusing the most exalted ways of virtue, as he has enrich'd you with many gifts of fortune, and left you nothing to do, but to make the best use of variety of blessings, to make the most of a short life, to study your own perfection, the honour of God, and the good of your neighbour; so it is now your duty to imitate the greatest servants of God, to enquire how the most eminent saints have liv'd, to study all the *arts* and *methods* of perfection, and to set no bounds to your love and gratitude to the bountiful author of so many blessings.

It is now your duty to turn your *five talents*, into five more, and to consider how your *time*, and *leisure*, and *health*, and *fortune*, may be made so many happy means of purifying your own

own ſoul, improving your fellow-creatures in the ways of virtue, and of carrying you at laſt to the greateſt heights of eternal glory.

As you have no *miſtreſs* to ſerve, ſo let your own ſoul be the object of your daily care and attendance. Be ſorry for its impurities, its ſpots and imperfections, and ſtudy all the holy arts of reſtoring it to its natural and primitive purity.

Delight in its ſervice, and beg of God to adorn it with every grace and perfection.

Nouriſh it with *good works*, give it peace in *ſolitude*, get it ſtrength in *prayer*, make it wiſe with *reading*, enlighten it by *meditation*, make it tender with *love*, ſweeten it with *humility*, humble it with *penance*, enliven it with *Pſalms* and *Hymns*, and comfort it with frequent *reflections* upon future glory. Keep it in the *preſence* of God, and teach it to imitate thoſe *guardian angels*, which though they attend on human affairs, and the loweſt of mankind, yet *always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven* St. Mat. xviii 10.

This, *Serena*, is your profeſſion. For as ſure as God is one God, ſo ſure it is, that he has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is to act up to the *excellency* of that nature which he has given them, to live by *reaſon*, to walk in the *light* of religion, to uſe every thing as wiſdom directs, to glorify

God in all his gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to his ſervice.

This is the *one common* command of God to all mankind. If you have an employment, you are to be thus reaſonable, and pious and holy in the exerciſe of it; if you have time and a fortune in your own power, you are oblig'd to be thus reaſonable, and holy, and pious, in the uſe of all your time, and all your fortune.

The right religious uſe of every thing, and every talent, is the indiſpenſable duty of every being that is capable of knowing right and wrong.

For the reaſon why we are to do *any thing* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him, is the ſame reaſon why we are to do *every thing* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him.

That which is a reaſon for our being *wiſe* and *holy* in the diſcharge of all our *buſineſs*, is the ſame reaſon for our being wiſe and holy in the uſe of all our *money*.

As we have always the *ſame natures*, and are every-where the ſervants of the ſame God, as every place is equally full of his preſence, and every thing is equally his gift, ſo we muſt always act according to the reaſon of our nature; we muſt do every thing as the ſervants of God; we muſt live in every place, as in his preſence; we muſt uſe every thing, as that ought to be us'd, which belongs to God.

Either

Either this piety and wisdom, and devotion is to go thro' every way of life, and to extend to the use of every thing, or it is to go through no part of life.

If we might forget our *selves*, or forget God, if we might disregard our reason, and live by *humour* and *fancy* in any thing, or at any time, or in any place, it would be as lawful to do the same in every thing, at every time, and every place.

If therefore some People fancy, that they must be grave and solemn at *Church*, but may be *silly* and *frantick* at home; that they must live by some rule on the *Sunday*, but may spend *other days* by chance; that they must have some times of *Prayer*, but may waste the rest of their time as they please; that they must give some money in *charity*, but may squander away the rest as they have a mind; such People have not enough consider'd the nature of Religion, or the true reasons of Piety. For he that upon principles of reason can tell, why it is good to be wise and heavenly-minded at *Church*, can tell that it's always desirable, to have the *same tempers* in all other places. He that truly knows, why he should spend any time well, knows that it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly understands the reasonableness, and excellency of *Charity*, will know, that it can never be excusable to waste any of our money in pride and folly, or in any needless expences.

For

For every argument that ſhews the wiſdom and excellency of Charity, proves the wiſdom of ſpending *all* our fortune well. Every argument that proves the wiſdom and reaſonableneſs of having times of prayer, ſhews the wiſdom and reaſonableneſs of loſing none of our time.

If any one could ſhew, that we need not *always* act as in the divine preſence, that we need not conſider and uſe *every thing*, as the gift of God, that we need not *always* live by reaſon, and make Religion the rule of all our actions, the ſame arguments would ſhew, that we need *never* act as in the preſence of God, nor make Religion and reaſon the meaſure of *any* of our actions. If therefore we are to live unto God at any time, or in any place, we are to live unto him at all times, and all places. If we are to uſe any thing as the gift of God, we are to uſe every thing as his gift. If we are to do any thing by ſtrict rules of reaſon and piety, we are to do every thing in the ſame manner. Becauſe *reaſon*, and *wiſdom*, and *piety* are as much the beſt things at *all times*, and in *all places*, as they are the beſt things at *any time*, or in *any* place.

If it is our glory and happineſs to have a *rational nature*, that is endued with wiſdom and reaſon, that is capable of imitating the Divine nature, then it muſt be our glory and happineſs, to improve our reaſon and wiſdom, to act up to the excellency of our rational nature, and to imitate God in all our actions, to the utmoſt of our power. They therefore who

who confine Religion to *times* and *places*, and some little rules of *retirement*, who think that it is being too strict and rigid to introduce religion into *common life*, and make it give laws to all their actions and ways of living, they who think thus, not only mistake, but they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion. For surely they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion, who can think, any part of their life is made more easy, for being free from it. They may well be said to mistake the *whole nature* of wisdom, who don't think it desirable, to be *always* wise. He has not learnt the *nature* of piety, who thinks it too much to be pious in all his actions. He does not sufficiently understand what *reason* is, who does not earnestly desire to live in every thing according to it.

If we had a Religion that consisted in absurd superstitions, that had no regard to the perfection of our nature, People might well be glad to have some part of their life excused from it. But as the Religion of the Gospel is only the refinement, and exaltation of our best faculties, as it only requires a life of the highest Reason, as it only requires us to use this world as in reason it ought to be used, to live in such *tempers* as are the glory of intelligent beings, to walk in such *wisdom* as exalts our nature, and to practise such piety, as will raise us to God; who can think it grievous, to live *always* in the spirit of such a Religion, to have *every part* of his life full of it, but he that would think it much more grievous, to be as the Angels of God in heaven?

Farther,

Farther, as God is one and the ſame being, always acting like himſelf and ſuitably to his own nature, ſo it is the duty of every being that he has created, to live according to the nature that he has given it, and *always* to act like it ſelf.

It is therefore an immutable law of God, that all rational beings ſhould act *reaſonably* in *all* their actions; not at this *time*, or in that *place*, or upon this *occaſion*, or in the uſe of ſome particular thing, but at *all* times, in *all* places, at *all* occaſions, and in the uſe of *all* things. This is a law that is as unchangeable as God, and can no more ceaſe to be, than God can ceaſe to be a God of wiſdom and order.

When therefore any being that is endued with reaſon, does an *unreaſonable* thing at any time, or in any place, or in the uſe of any thing, it ſins againſt the *great law* of its nature, abuſes its ſelf, and ſins againſt God the author of that nature.

They therefore who plead for *indulgences* and *vanities*, for any *fooliſh* faſhions, *cuſtoms* and *humours* of the world, for the miſuſe of our *time* or *money*, plead for a rebellion againſt our nature, for a rebellion againſt God, who has given us reaſon for no other end, than to make it the *rule* and *meaſure* of all our ways of life.

When therefore you are guilty of any *folly* or *extravagance*, or indulge any *vain* temper, don't conſider it as a ſmall matter, becauſe it may ſeem ſo, if compar'd to ſome other ſins; but

but consider it, as it is acting *contrary* to your *nature*, and then you will see that there is nothing *small*, that is *unreasonable*. Because all unreasonable ways, are contrary to the nature of all rational beings; whether *men*, or *Angels*. Neither of which can be any longer agreeable to God, than so far as they act according to the reason and excellence of their nature.

The infirmities of human life make such *food* and *raiment* necessary for us, as *Angels* do not want; but then it is no more allowable for us to turn these necessities into *follies*, and indulge our selves in the luxury of *food*, or the vanities of *dress*, than it is allowable for *Angels* to act below the dignity of their proper state. For a reaosnable life, and a wise use of our proper condition, is as much the duty of all *men*, as it is the duty of all *Angels* and *intelligent* beings. These are not *speculative* flights, or *imaginary* notions, but are *plain* and *undeniable laws*, that are founded in the *nature* of rational beings, who as such are obliged to live by reason, and glorify God by a continual right use of their several talents and faculties. So that tho' men are not *Angels*, yet they may know for what ends, and by what rules men are to live and act, by considering the state and perfection of Angels. Our blessed Saviour has plainly turn'd our thoughts this way, by making this petition a constant part of all our Prayers, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* A plain proof, that the

the obedience of *men*, is to imitate the obedience of *Angels*, and that rational beings on earth, are to live unto God, as rational beings in Heaven live unto him.

When therefore you would repreſent to your mind, how Chriſtians ought to live unto God, and in what degrees of wiſdom and holineſs, they ought to uſe the things of this life, you muſt not look at the world, but you muſt look up to God and the ſociety of Angels, and think what wiſdom and holineſs is fit to prepare you for ſuch a ſtate of glory. You muſt look to all the *higheſt precepts* of the Goſpel, you muſt examine your ſelf by the *ſpirit* of Chriſt, you muſt think how the *wiſeſt* men in the world have liv'd, you muſt think how *departed ſouls* would live, if they were again to act the ſhort part of human life, you muſt think what degrees of wiſdom and holineſs, you will wiſh for, when you are leaving the World.

Now all this is not over-ſtraining the matter, or propoſing to our ſelves, any needleſs perfection. It is but barely complying with the Apoſtle's advice, where he ſays, *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.* For no one can come near the doctrine of this paſſage, but he that propoſes to himſelf to do every

Phil. iv. 8.

every thing in this life as the ſervant of God, to live by reaſon in every thing that he does, and to make the wiſdom and holineſs of the Goſpel, the rule and meaſure of his deſiring and uſing evey gift of God.

CHAP. VI.

Containing the great obligations, and the great advantages of make a wiſe and religious uſe of our eſtates *and* fortunes.

AS the holineſs of Chriſtianity conſecrates all *ſtates* and *employments* of life unto God, as it requires us to aſpire after an univerſal obedience, doing and uſing every thing as the ſervants of God, ſo are we more eſpecially oblig'd to obſerve this religious exactneſs, in the uſe of our *eſtates* and *fortunes*,

The reaſon of this would appear very plain, if we were only to conſider, that our *eſtate* is as much the gift of God, as our *eyes*, or our *hands*, and is no more to be buried, or thrown away at pleaſure, than we are to put out our eyes, or throw away our limbs, as we pleaſe.

But beſides this conſideration, there are ſeveral other great and important reaſons, why we ſhould be religiouſly exact in the uſe of our eſtates.

Firſt,

Firſt, Becauſe the manner of uſing our money, or ſpending our eſtate, enters ſo far into the buſineſs of every day, and makes ſo great a part of our common life, that our *common life* muſt be much of the ſame nature, as our *common way* of ſpending our eſtate. If reaſon and religion govern us in this, then reaſon and religion hath got great hold of us; but if *humour*, *pride*, and *fancy*, are the meaſures of our ſpending our eſtate, then humour, pride and fancy, will have the direction of the greateſt part of our life.

Secondly, Another great reaſon for devoting all our eſtate to right uſes, is this, becauſe it is capable of being uſed to the moſt *excellent* purpoſes, and is ſo *great* a means of doing good. If we waſte it we don't waſte a *trifle*, that ſignifies little, but we waſte that which might be made as eyes to the *blind*, as a huſband to the *widow*, as a father to the *orphan:* We waſte that, which not only enables us to miniſter worldly comforts to thoſe that are in diſtreſs, but that which might purchaſe for our ſelves everlaſting treaſures in heaven. So that if we part with our money in fooliſh ways we part with a great power of comforting our fellow creatures, and of making our ſelves for ever bleſſed.

If there be nothing ſo glorious as doing good, if there is nothing that makes us ſo like to God, then nothing can be ſo glorious in the uſe of our money, as to uſe it all in works of love and goodneſs, making our

ſelves

ſelves *friends*, and *fathers*, and *benefactors*, to all our fellow creatures, imitating the divine love, and turning all our power into acts of generoſity, care and kindneſs, to ſuch as are in need of it.

If a man had *eyes*, and *hands*, and *feet*, that he could give to thoſe that wanted them; if he ſhould either lock them up in a *cheſt*, or pleaſe himſelf with ſome *needleſs* or *ridiculous* uſe of them, inſtead of giving them to his brethren that were *blind* and *lame*, ſhould we not juſtly reckon him an inhuman wretch? If he ſhould rather chuſe to amuſe himſelf with *furniſhing* his houſe with thoſe things, than to entitle himſelf to an eternal reward, by giving them to thoſe that wanted *eyes* and *hands*, might we not juſtly reckon him mad?

Now *money* has very much the nature of *eyes* and *feet*; if we either lock it up in *cheſts*, or waſte it in *needleſs* and *ridiculous* expences upon ourſelves, whilſt the poor and the diſtreſſed want it for their *neceſſary* uſes; if we conſume it in the *ridiculous ornaments* of apparel, whilſt others are ſtarving in *nakedneſs*, we are not far from the cruelty of him that chuſes rather to adorn his houſe with the *hands* and *eyes*, than to give them to thoſe that want them. If we chuſe to indulge ourſelves in ſuch expenſive enjoyments, as have no *real uſe* in them, ſuch as ſatisfy no *real want*, rather than to entitle ourſelves to an eternal reward, by diſpoſing of our money well, we are guilty of his madneſs, that rather chuſes

to lock up *eyes* and *hands*; than to make himſelf for ever bleſſed, by giving them to thoſe that want them.

For after we have ſatisfied our own *ſober* and *reaſonable* wants, all the reſt of our money is but like *ſpare eyes*, or *hands*; it is ſomething that we cannot keep to ourſelves, without being *fooliſh* in the uſe of it; ſomething that can only be us'd well, by giving it to thoſe that want it.

Thirdly, If we waſte our money, we are not only guilty of waſting a *talent* which God has given us, we are not only guilty of making that uſeleſs, which is ſo powerful a means of doing good, but we do ourſelves this farther harm, that we turn this uſeful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourſelves; becauſe ſo far as it is ſpent *wrong*, ſo far it is ſpent in the ſupport of ſome *wrong temper*, in gratifying ſome vain and unreaſonable deſires, in conforming to thoſe faſhions, and pride of the world, which, as Chriſtians and reaſonable men, we are obliged to renounce.

As *wit* and fine *parts* cannot be trifled away and only loſt, but will expoſe thoſe that have them into greater follies, if they are not ſtrictly devoted to piety; ſo *money*, if it is not uſed ſtrictly according to reaſon and religion, cannot only be trifled away, but it will betray people into *greater* follies, and make them live a more ſilly and extravagant life, than they could have done without it. If, therefore,

you

you don't ſpend your money in doing good to others, you muſt ſpend it to the hurt of yourſelf. You will act like a man that ſhould refuſe to give that as a *cordial* to a ſick friend, though he could not drink it himſelf without *inflaming* his blood. For this is the caſe of *ſuperfluous* money; if you give it to thoſe that want it, it is a *cordial*; if you ſpend it upon yourſelf in ſomething that you do not want, it only *inflames* and diſorders your mind, and makes you worſe than you would be without it.

Conſider again the fore-mentioned compariſon; if the man that would not make a right uſe of ſpare *eyes* and *hands*, ſhould, by continually trying to uſe them himſelf, ſpoil his own eyes and hands, we might juſtly accuſe him of ſtill greater madneſs.

Now this is truly the caſe of riches ſpent upon ourſelves in *vain* and *needleſs* expences; in trying to uſe them where they have no *real uſe*, nor we any *real want*, we only uſe them to our great hurt, in creating unreaſonable deſires, in nouriſhing ill tempers, in indulging our paſſions, and ſupporting a worldly, vain turn of mind. For high *eating* and *drinking*, fine *cloaths*, and fine *houſes*, *ſtate* and *equipage*, gay *pleaſures* and *diverſions*, do all of them naturally hurt and diſorder our hearts; they are the food and nouriſhment of all the folly and weakneſs of our nature, and are certain means to make us vain and worldly in our tempers. They are all of them the ſupport

of ſomething, that ought not to be ſupported; they are contrary to that ſobriety and piety of heart, which reliſhes divine things; they are like ſo many weights upon our minds, that make us leſs able, and leſs inclined to raiſe up our thoughts and affections to the things that are above.

So that money thus ſpent, is not merely *waſted* or *loſt*, but it is ſpent to bad purpoſes, and miſerable effects, to the corruption and diſorder of our hearts, and to the making us leſs able to live up to the ſublime doctrines of the Goſpel. It is but like keeping money from the poor, to buy poiſon for ourſelves.

For ſo much as is ſpent in the vanity of *dreſs*, may be reckon'd ſo much laid out to *fix* vanity in our minds. So much as is laid out for *idleneſs* and *indulgence*, may be reckon'd ſo much given to *render* our hearts *dull* and *ſenſual*. So much as is ſpent in *ſtate* and *equipage*, may be reckon'd ſo much ſpent to *dazzle* your own eyes, and render you the *idol* of your own imagination. And ſo in every thing, when you go from *reaſonable* wants, you only ſupport ſome unreaſonable *temper*, ſome *turn* of mind, which every good Chriſtian is called upon to *renounce*.

So that on all accounts, whether we conſider our fortune as a *talent* and truſt from God, or the *great good* that it enables us to do, or the *great harm* that it does to ourſelves, if idly ſpent; on all theſe great accounts it appears, that it is abſolutely neceſſary, to make reaſon

ſon and religion the ſtrict rule of uſing all our fortune.

Every exhortation in Scripture to be wiſe and reaſonable, ſatisfying only ſuch wants as God would have ſatisfy'd; every exhortation to be ſpiritual and heavenly, preſſing after a glorious change of our nature; every exhortation to love our neighbour as ourſelves, to love all mankind as God has loved them, is a command to be *ſtrictly religious* in the uſe of our money. For none of theſe tempers can be comply'd with, unleſs we be wiſe and reaſonable, ſpiritual and heavenly, exerciſing a brotherly love, a godlike charity in the uſe of all our fortune. Theſe tempers, and this uſe of our worldly goods, is ſo much the doctrine of all the New Teſtament, that you can't read a chapter, without being taught ſomething of it. I ſhall only produce one remarkable paſſage of Scripture, which is ſufficient to juſtify all that I have ſaid concerning this religious uſe of all our fortune.

When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats; and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me

meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.——Then ſhall he ſay unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal.

I have quoted this paſſage at length, becauſe if one looks at the way of the world, one would hardly think, that Chriſtians had ever read this part of Scripture. For what is there in the lives of Chriſtians, that looks as if their ſalvation *depended* upon theſe good works? And yet the neceſſity of them is here aſſerted in the higheſt manner, and preſſed upon us by a lively deſcription of the glory and terrors of the day of Judgment.

Some people, even of thoſe who may be reckon'd virtuous Chriſtians, look upon this text only as a general recommendation of *occaſional* works of charity; whereas it ſhews the neceſſity not only of occaſional charities now and then, but the neceſſity of ſuch an *entire charitable life*, as is a continual exerciſe of all ſuch works of charity as we are able to perform.

You

You own, that you have no title to salvation, if you have neglected these good works; because such persons as have neglected them, are at the last day to be placed on the left hand, and banished with a *Depart, ye cursed.* There is, therefore, no salvation but in the performance of these good Works. Who is it, therefore, that may be said to have performed these good Works? Is it he that has *sometime* assisted a *prisoner*, or relieved the *poor* or *sick?* This would be as absurd, as to say, that he had performed the duties of *devotion*, who had *sometime* said his prayers. Is it, therefore, he that has *several times* done these works of charity? This can no more be said, than he can be said to be the truly *just* man, who had done acts of justice *several times.* What is the rule therefore, or measure of performing these good works? How shall a man trust that he performs them as he ought?

Now the rule is very *plain* and *easy*, and such as is *common* to every other *virtue*, or good *temper*, as well as to charity.—Who is the humble, or meek, or devout, or just, or faithful man? Is it he that has *several times* done acts of humility, meekness, devotion, justice, or fidelity? No. But it is he that lives in the *habitual exercise* of these virtues. In like manner, he only can be said to have performed these works of charity, who *lives* in the *habitual exercise* of them to the utmost of his power. He only has performed the duty of divine love, who loves God *with all*

his heart, and *with all his mind*, and *with all his ſtrength*. And he only has performed the duty of theſe good works, who has done them with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength. For there is no other meaſure of our doing good, than our *power* of doing it.

The Apoſtle St. *Peter* puts this queſtion to our bleſſed Saviour; *Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him, till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay unto thee, until ſeven times; but until ſeventy times ſeven.* Not as if after this number of offences, a man might then ceaſe to forgive; bat the expreſſion of ſeventy times ſeven, is to ſhew us, that we are not to bound our forgiveneſs by *any number* of offences, but are to continue forgiving the moſt repeated offences againſt us. Thus our Saviour ſaith in another place, if he treſpaſs *againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him.* If, therefore, a man ceaſes to forgive his brother, becauſe he has forgiven him *often* already; if he excuſes himſelf from forgiving this man, becauſe he has forgiven *ſeveral others*; ſuch a one breaks this law of Chriſt, concerning the forgiving one's brother.

Matt xviii. 22.

Luke xvii. 4.

Now the rule of *forgiving*, is alſo the rule of *giving*; you are not to *give*, or do good to *ſeven*, but to *ſeventy times ſeven*. You are not to ceaſe from giving, becauſe you have given often

often to the same person, or to other persons; but must look upon yourself as much obliged to continue relieving those that continue in want, as you was obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power, you had been excused from relieving any person *once*; but if it is in your power to relieve people *often*, it is as much your duty to do it often, as it is the duty of others to do it but seldom, because they are but seldom able. He that is not ready to forgive every brother, as often as he wants to be forgiven, does not forgive like a disciple of Christ. And he that is not ready to give to every brother, that wants to have something given him, does not give like a disciple of Christ. For it is as necessary to give to seventy times seven, to live in the continual exercise of all good works to the utmost of our power, as it is necessary to forgive until seventy times seven, and live in the habitual exercise of this forgiving temper towards all that want it.

And the reason of all this is very plain, because there is the same goodness, the same excellency, and the same *necessity* of being thus charitable at one time, as at another. It is as much the best use of our money, to be *always* doing good with it, as it is the best use of it at any *particular time*; so that that which is a reason for a charitable *action*, is as good a reason for a charitable *life*. That which is a reason for forgiving *one* offence, is the same reason for forgiving *all* offences. For such charity has nothing to recommend it to day, but

what

what will be the ſame recommendation of it to-morrow; and you cannot neglect it at one time, without being guilty of the ſame ſin, as if you neglected it at another time.

As ſure, therefore, as theſe works of charity are neceſſary to ſalvation, ſo ſure is it, that we are to do them to the utmoſt of our power; not to-day, or to-morrow, but through the *whole courſe* of our life. If therefore it be our duty at any time to deny ourſelves any *needleſs* expences, to be *moderate* and *frugal*, that we may have to give to thoſe that want, it is as much our duty to do ſo at all times, that we may be farther able to do more good: For if it is at any time a ſin to prefer *needleſs vain* expence to works of charity, it is ſo at all times: becauſe charity as much excels all needleſs and vain expences at one time as at another. So that if it is ever neceſſary to our ſalvation, to take care of theſe works of charity, and to ſee that we make ourſelves in ſome degree capable of doing them; it is as neceſſary to our ſalvation, to take care to make ourſelves as capable as we can be, of performing them in all the parts of our life.

Either therefore you muſt ſo far renounce your Chriſtianity, as to ſay, that you need never perform any of theſe good works; or you muſt own, that you are to perform them all your life in as high a degree as you are able. There is no middle way to be taken, any more than there is a middle way betwixt pride and humility, or temperance and intemperance.

perance. If you do not ſtrive to fulfil all charitable works, if you neglect any of them that are in your power, and deny aſſiſtance to thoſe that want what you can give, let it be when it will, or where it will, you number yourſelf amongſt thoſe that want Chriſtian charity. Becauſe it is as much your duty to do good with all that you have, and to live in the continual exerciſe of good works, as it is your duty to be temperate in all that you eat and drink.

Hence alſo appears the *neceſſity* of renouncing all thoſe *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* expences, which the pride and folly of mankind has made ſo common and faſhionable in the world. For if it is neceſſary to do good works as far as you are able, it muſt be as neceſſary to renounce thoſe needneſs ways of ſpending money, which render you unable to do works of charity.

You muſt therefore no more conform to theſe ways of the world, than you muſt conform to the vices of the world; you muſt no more ſpend with thoſe that idly waſte their money as their own humour leads them, than you muſt drink with the drunken, or indulge yourſelf with the epicure; becauſe a courſe of ſuch expences is no more conſiſtent with a *life of charity*, than exceſs in drinking is conſiſtent with a *life of ſobriety*. When therefore any one tells you of the lawfulneſs of expenſive apparel, or the innocency of pleaſing yourſelf with coſtly ſatisfactions, only imagine that the ſame perſon was to tell you, that you need

not

not do works of charity; that Chriſt does not require you to do good unto your poor brethren, as unto him; and then you will ſee the wickedneſs of ſuch advice: for to tell you, that you may live in ſuch expences, as make it impoſſible for you to live in the exerciſe of good works, is the ſame thing as telling you, that you need not have any care about ſuch good works themſelves.

CHAP. VII.

How the imprudent uſe of an eſtate *corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous paſſions through the whole courſe of life; repreſented in the character of* Flavia.

IT has already been obſerved, that a prudent and religious care is to be uſed, in the manner of ſpending our *money* or *eſtate*, becauſe the manner of ſpending our eſtate makes ſo great a part of our common life, and is ſo much the buſineſs of every day, that according as we are wiſe, or imprudent, in this reſpect, the *whole courſe* of our lives, will be render'd either very wiſe, or very full of folly.

Perſons, that are well *affected* to Religion, that receive inſtructions of piety with *pleaſure*

and *satisfaction*, often wonder how it comes to pass, that they make no greater *progress* in that Religion which they so much *admire*.

Now the reason of it is this; it is because Religion lives only in their *head*, but something else has possession of their *hearts*; and therefore they continue from *year* to *year* mere *admirers*, and *praisers* of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts.

If it be asked, why Religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is this. It is not because they live in *gross sins*, or *debaucheries*, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders.

But it is because their *hearts* are constantly *employed*, *perverted*, and kept in a wrong state, by the *indiscreet use* of such things as are *lawful* to be used.

The use and enjoyment of their estates is *lawful*, and therefore it never comes into their heads to imagine any great danger from that quarter. They never reflect, that there is a *vain*, and *imprudent* use of their estates, which though it does not destroy like *gross sins*, yet so *disorders* the heart, and supports it in such *sensuality* and *dulness*, such *pride* and *vanity*, as makes it incapable of receiving the *life* and *spirit* of piety.

For our souls may receive an infinite hurt, and be rendered incapable of all virtue, merely by the use of *innocent* and *lawful* things.

What

What is more innocent than *rest* and *retirement?* And yet what more dangerous, than sloth and idleness? What is more lawful than *eating* and *drinking?* And yet what more destructive of all virtue, what more fruitful of all vice, than *sensuality* and *indulgence?*

How *lawful* and *praise-worthy* is the care of a family? And yet how certainly are many people rendered incapable of all virtue, by a worldly and solicitous temper?

Now it is for want of religious exactness in the use of these *innocent* and *lawful things* that Religion cannot get possession of our hearts. And it is in the *right* and *prudent* management of ourselves, as to these things, that all the *arts* of holy living chiefly consists.

Gross sins are plainly seen, and easily avoided by persons that profess Religion. But the *indiscreet* and *dangerous* use of innocent and lawful things, as it does not *shock* and *offend* our consciences, so it is difficult to make people at all sensible of the danger of it.

A *Gentleman* that expends all his estate in *sports*, and a *woman* that lays out all her fortune upon herself, can hardly be perswaded, that the spirit of Religion cannot subsist in such a way of life.

These persons, as has been observed, may live free from debaucheries, they may be friends of Religion, so far as to *praise* and *speak* well of it, and admire it in their imaginations; but it cannot govern their hearts, and be the

spirit

ſpirit of their actions, till they change their way of life, and let Religion give laws to the uſe and ſpending of their eſtates.

For a *woman* that loves *dreſs*, that thinks no expence too great to beſtow upon the *adorning* of her perſon, cannot ſtop there. For that temper draws a *thouſand* other follies along with it, and will render the whole courſe of her life, her *buſineſs*, her *converſation*, her *hopes*, her *fears*, her *taſte*, her *pleaſures*, and *diverſions*, all ſuitable to it.

Flaviá and *Miranda* are two maiden ſiſters, that have each of them *two hundred pounds* a year. They buried their parents, twenty years ago, and have ſince that time ſpent their eſtate as they pleaſed.

Flavia has been the *wonder* of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making ſo ſurprizing a figure in ſo moderate a fortune. Several *ladies* that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always ſo *genteel*, and ſo *conſtant* at all places of *pleaſure* and *expence*. She has every thing that is in the *faſhion*, and is in every place where there is any *diverſion*. *Flavia* is very *orthodox*, ſhe talks warmly againſt *hereticks* and *ſchiſmaticks*, is generally at *Church*, and often at the ſacrament. She once commended a *ſermon* that was againſt the *pride* and *vanity* of dreſs, and thought it was very juſt againſt *Lucinda*, whom ſhe takes to be a great deal finer than ſhe need to be. If any one aſks *Flavia* to do ſomething in charity, if ſhe likes

likes the perſon who makes the propoſal, or happens to be in a right *temper*, ſhe will toſs him *half* a *crown* or a *crown*, and tell him, if he knew what a *long Milliner's bill* ſhe had juſt received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A *quarter* of a year after this, ſhe hears a *ſermon* upon the *neceſſity* of charity; ſhe thinks the man preaches well, that it is a very *proper* ſubject, that people *want* much to be put in mind of it: but ſhe applies nothing to herſelf, becauſe ſhe remembers that ſhe gave a *crown* ſome time ago, when ſhe could ſo ill ſpare it.

As for *poor* people themſelves, ſhe will admit of no complaints from them; ſhe is very poſitive they are all *cheats* and *liars*, and will ſay any thing to get relief, and therefore it muſt be a ſin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tendereſt conſcience in the world; if you was to ſee, how *ſcrupulous* and apprehenſive ſhe is of the guilt and danger of *giving* amiſs.

She buys all books of *wit* and *humour*, and has made an expenſive collection of all our *Engliſh Poets*. For ſhe ſays, one cannot have a *true taſte* of any of them, without being very converſant with them all.

She will ſometimes read a *book* of *Piety*, if it is a ſhort one, if it is much commended for *ſtile* and *language*, and ſhe can tell where to *borrow* it.

Flavia

Flavia is very *idle*, and yet very fond of *fine work:* this makes her often *ſit* working in *bed* until *noon*, and be told many a *long ſtory* before ſhe is up; ſo that I need not tell you, that her morning devotions are not *always* rightly performed.

Flavia would be a *miracle* of Piety, if ſhe was but half ſo careful of her ſoul, as ſhe is of her body. The riſing of a *pimple* in her face, the ſting of a *gnat*, will make her keep her room two or three days, and ſhe thinks they are very *raſh* people that don't take care of things in time. This makes her ſo over-careful of her *health*, that ſhe never thinks ſhe is well enough; and ſo *over indulgent*, that ſhe never can be really well. So that it coſts her a great deal in *ſleeping*-draughts and *waking*-draughts, in *ſpirits* for the head, in *drops* for the nerves, in *cordials* for the ſtomach, and in *ſaffron* for her *tea*.

If you viſit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*, you will always meet *good company*, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the laſt *lampoon*, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what *plays* were acted that week, which is the fineſt ſong in the *opera*, who was intolerable at the laſt aſſembly, and what games are moſt in faſhion. *Flavia* thinks they are *Atheiſts* that play at *cards* on the *Sunday*, but ſhe will tell you the *nicety* of all the games, what *cards* ſhe held, how ſhe *play'd* them, and the *hiſtory* of all that happened at *play*, as ſoon as ſhe

comes from *Church*. If you would know who is *rude* and *ill-natur'd*, who is *vain* and *foppiſh*, who lives too *high*, and who is in *debt*. If you would know what is the quarrel at a *certain houſe*, or who and who are in *love*. If you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what *cloaths* ſhe has bought, how ſhe loves *compliments*, and what a long ſtory ſhe told at ſuch a place. If you would know how croſs *Lucius* is to his *wife*, what ill-natur'd things he ſays to her, when *no body* hears him; if you would know how they hate one another in their *hearts*, tho' they appear ſo kind in publick; you muſt viſit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*. But ſtill ſhe has ſo great a regard for the holineſs of the *Sunday*, that ſhe has turned a poor old widow out of her houſe, as a *prophane wretch*, for having been found once *mending her cloaths* on the *Sunday* night.

Thus lives *Flavia*; and if ſhe lives ten years longer, ſhe will have ſpent about *fifteen hundred and ſixty Sundays* after this manner. She will have wore about *two hundred* different ſuits of cloaths. Out of this *thirty years* of her life, *fifteen* of them will have been diſpoſed of in *bed*; and of the remaining fifteen, about *fourteen* of them will have been conſumed in eating, drinking, dreſſing, viſiting, converſation, reading and hearing Plays and Romances, at Opera's, Aſſemblies, Balls and Diverſions. For you may reckon all the time that ſhe is *up*, thus ſpent, except about an *hour* and half, that is diſpoſed of at Church,

moſt

most *Sundays* in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of oeconomy, she will have spent *sixty hundred* pounds upon herself, bating only some *shillings*, *crowns*, or *half-crowns*, that have gone from her in *accidental* charities.

I shall not take upon me to say, that it is impossible for *Flavia* to be saved; but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from Scripture to think she is in the way of salvation. For her whole life is in direct opposition to all those *tempers* and *practices*, which the Gospel has made necessary to salvation.

If you was to hear her say, that she had lived all her life like *Anna* the Propheteſs, who *departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day*, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to say, that she has been *striving to enter in at the strait gate*, or making any *one doctrine* of the Gospel, a rule of her life.

She may as well say, that she lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that she has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers, as he required of all those that would be his disciples. She may as truly say, that she has every day *washed the saints feet*, as that she has lived in christian *humility* and *poverty of spirit*; and as reasonably think, that she has taught a *Charity-school*, as that she has lived in *works of charity*. She has as much reason to

think, that ſhe has been a *centinel* in an army, as that ſhe has lived in *watching*, and *ſelf-denial*. And it may as fairly be ſaid, that ſhe lived by the labour of her hands, as that ſhe had *given all diligence to make her calling and election ſure*.

And here it is to be well obſerved, that the *poor*, *vain* turn of mind, the *irreligion*, the *folly* and *vanity* of this whole life of *Flavia*, is all owing to the *manner* of uſing her eſtate. It is this that has formed her *ſpirit*, that has given life to every *idle temper*, that has ſupported every *trifling paſſion*, and kept her from all thoughts of a prudent, uſeful, and devout life.

When her parents dy'd, ſhe had no thought about her two hundred pounds a year, but that ſhe had ſo much money to do what ſhe would with, to ſpend upon herſelf, and purchaſe the pleaſures and gratifications of all her paſſions.

And it is this ſetting out, this falſe judgment and indiſcreet uſe of her fortune, that has filled her whole life with the ſame indiſcretion, and kept her from thinking of what is *right*, and *wiſe* and *pious* in every thing elſe.

If you have ſeen her delighted in *plays* and *romances*, in *ſcandal* and *backbiting*, eaſily *flatter'd*, and ſoon *affronted*. If you have ſeen her devoted to *pleaſures* and *diverſions*, a ſlave to every *paſſion* in its turn, nice in every thing that concerned her *body* or *dreſs*, careleſs of every

every thing that might benefit her *ſoul*, always wanting ſome new entertainment, and ready for every *happy* invention, in *ſhew* or *dreſs*, it was becauſe ſhe had *purchaſed* all theſe tempers with the yearly revenue of her fortune.

She might have been *humble*, *ſerious*, *devout*, a lover of *good books*, an admirer of *prayer* and *retirement*, careful of her *time*, diligent in *good works*, full of *charity* and the *love* of God, but that the imprudent uſe of her eſtate forc'd all the contrary tempers upon her.

And it was no wonder, that ſhe ſhou'd turn her *time*, her *mind*, her *health* and *ſtrength* to the ſame uſes that ſhe turn'd her fortune. It is owing to her being wrong in ſo great an *article* of life, that you can ſee nothing wiſe, or reaſonable, or pious in any other part of it.

Now though the irregular trifling ſpirit of this *character* belongs, I hope, but to few people, yet many may here learn ſome inſtruction from it, and perhaps ſee ſomething of their own ſpirit in it.

For as *Flavia* ſeems to be undone by the unreaſonable uſe of her fortune, ſo the *lowneſs* of moſt peoples virtue, the *imperfections* of their piety, and the diſorders of their *paſſions*, is generally owing to their imprudent uſe and enjoyment of lawful and innocent things.

More people are kept from a true ſenſe and taſte of Religion by a *regular kind* of ſenſuality and indulgence, than by *groſs drunkenneſs*. More men live regardleſs of the great

duties of piety, through too *great a concern* for worldly goods, than through *direct injustice*.

This man would perhaps be devout, if he was not so great a *Virtuoso*. Another is deaf to all the motives to piety, by indulging an *idle, slothful* temper.

Could you cure This man of his great *curiosity* and *inquisitive* temper, or That of his *false* satisfaction and *thirst* after *learning*, you need do no more to make them both become men of great piety.

If this *woman* would make *fewer visits*, or That not be *always talking*, they would neither of them find it half so hard to be affected with Religion.

For all these things are only *little*, when they are compared to *great sins*; and though they are little in that respect, yet they are great, as they are *impediments* and *hindrances* of a pious spirit.

For as *consideration* is the only *eye* of the soul, as the truths of Religion can be seen by nothing else, so whatever raises a *levity* of mind, a *trifling* spirit, renders the soul incapable of seeing, apprehending, and relishing the doctrines of piety.

Would we therefore make a real progress in Religion, we must not only abhor *gross* and *notorious* sins, but we must regulate the *innocent* and *lawful* parts of our behaviour, and put the most common and allow'd actions of life under the rules of discretion and piety.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

How the wise and pious use of an Estate naturally carrieth us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian Life; represented in the character of Miranda.

ANY one pious regularity of any one part of our life, is of great advantage not only on its own account, but as it uses us to live by rule, and think of the government of our selves.

A man of business, that has brought one part of his affairs under certain rules, is in a fair way to take the same care of the rest.

So he that has brought any one part of his life under the rules of religion, may thence be taught to extend the same order and regularity into other parts of his life.

If any one is so wise as to think his *time* too precious to be disposed of by chance, and left to be devoured by any thing that happens in his way. If he lays himself under a necessity of observing how every day goes through his hands, and obliges himself to a certain order of time in his *business*, his *retirements*, and *devotions*, it is hardly to be imagined, how soon such a conduct would reform, improve, and perfect the whole course of his life.

He that once thus knows the value, and reaps the advantage of a well-order'd time, will not long be a ſtranger to the value of any thing elſe that is of any real concern to him.

A rule that relates even to the ſmalleſt part of our life, is of great benefit to us, merely as it is a rule.

For, for as the *Proverb* ſaith, *He that has begun well, has half done:* So he that has begun to live by rule, has gone a great way towards the perfection of his life.

By *rule*, muſt here be conſtantly underſtood, a *religious rule*, obſerved upon a principle of duty to God.

For if a man ſhould oblige himſelf to be moderate in his *meals*, only in regard to his *ſtomach*; or abſtain from *drinking*, only to avoid the *head-ach*; or be moderate in his *ſleep*, through fear of a *lethargy*, he might be exact in theſe rules, without being at all the better man for them.

But when he is moderate and regular in any of theſe things, out of a ſenſe of *Chriſtian ſobriety* and *ſelf-denial*, that he may offer unto God a more reaſonable and holy life, then it is that the *ſmalleſt rule* of this kind, is naturally the beginning of great piety.

For the ſmalleſt rule in theſe matters is of great benefit, as it teaches us ſome part of the government of our ſelves, as it keeps up a *tenderneſs* of mind, as it preſents God often to our thoughts, and brings a ſenſe of religion into the ordinary actions of our common life.

If

If a man, whenever he was in company, where any one *swore*, talk'd *lewdly*, or spoke *evil* of his neighbour, should make it a *rule* to himself, either gently to reprove him, or if that was not proper, then to leave the company as decently as he could; he would find, that this little rule, like a little *leaven* hid in a great quantity of *meal*, would spread and extend itself through the whole form of his life.

If another should oblige himself to abstain on the *Lord's-day* from many *innocent* and *lawful* things, as *travelling*, *visiting*, *common conversation*, and discoursing upon *worldly matters*, at *trade*, *news*, and the like; if he should devote the day, besides the publick worship, to greater retirement, reading, devotion, instruction, and works of Charity: Though it may seem but a small thing, or a needless nicety, to require a man to abstain from such things, as may be done without sin, yet whoever would try the benefit of so little a rule would perhaps thereby find such a change made in his spirit, and such a taste of piety raised in his mind, as he was an entire stranger to before.

It would be easy to shew in many other instances, how little and small matters are the first steps, and natural beginnings of great perfection.

But the two things which of all others, most want to be under a strict rule, and which are the greatest blessings both to our selves and

and others, when they are rightly us'd, are our *time*, and our *money*. Theſe talents are continual means and opportunities of doing good.

He that is piouſly ſtrict, and exact in the wiſe management of either of theſe, cannot be long ignorant of the right uſe of the other. And he that is happy in the religious care and diſpoſal of them both, is already aſcended ſeveral ſteps upon the *ladder* of Chriſtian perfection.

Miranda, (the Siſter of *Flavia*) is a ſober reaſonable Chriſtian; as ſoon as ſhe was miſtreſs of her *time* and *fortune*, it was her firſt thought, how ſhe might *beſt fulfil* every thing that God requir'd of her in the uſe of them, and how ſhe might make the beſt and happieſt uſe of this ſhort life. She depends upon the truth of what our bleſſed Lord hath ſaid, *that there is but one thing needful*, and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reaſon for doing or not doing, for liking or not liking any thing, and that is the *will* of God. She is not ſo weak, as to pretend to add, what is call'd the *fine lady*, to the true Chriſtian; *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the *ſound* of ſuch ſilly words; ſhe has renounc'd the world, to follow Chriſt in the exerciſe of humility, charity, devotion, abſtinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda*'s fine breeding.

Whilſt ſhe was under her *mother*, ſhe was forced to be *genteel*, to live in *ceremony*, to ſit up late at *nights*, to be in the folly of every *faſhion*, and always *viſiting* on *Sundays*. To go *patch'd*, and loaded with a *burden of finery*, to the holy Sacrament; to be in every polite *converſation*; to hear profaneneſs at the *play-houſe*, and wanton ſongs and love intrigues at the *opera*; to dance at publick places, that *fops* and *rakes* might admire the fineneſs of her *ſhape*, and the *beauty* of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to attone for it, by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and her ſelf; but ſhe conſiders all as due to God, and ſo does every thing in his name, and for his ſake. This makes her conſider her *fortune*, as the gift of God, that is to be uſed as every thing is, that belongs to God, for the wiſe and reaſonable ends of a Chriſtian and holy life. Her *fortune* therefore is divided betwixt her ſelf, and ſeveral other *poor People*, and ſhe has only her part of *relief* from it. She thinks it the ſame folly to indulge herſelf in needleſs, vain expences, as to give to other People to ſpend in the ſame way. Therefore as ſhe will not give a *poor* man money to go ſee a *Puppet-ſhew*, neither will ſhe allow her ſelf any to ſpend in the ſame manner; thinking it very proper to be as *wiſe* her ſelf, as ſhe expects poor men

ſhould

ſhould be. For is it a folly and a crime in a *poor* man, ſays *Miranda*, to waſte what is given him, in fooliſh trifles, whilſt he wants *meat*, *drink*, and *cloaths?* And is it leſs folly, or a leſs crime in me to ſpend that money in ſilly diverſions, which might be ſo much better ſpent in *imitation* of the divine goodneſs, in works of kindneſs and charity towards my fellow creatures, and fellow Chriſtians? If a poor man's own *neceſſities* are a reaſon, why he ſhould not waſte any of his money idly, ſurely the neceſſities of the *poor*, the *excellency* of Charity, which is receiv'd as done to Chriſt himſelf is a much *greater reaſon*, why no one ſhould ever waſte any of his money. For if he does ſo, he does not only do like the poor man, only waſte that which he wants himſelf, but he waſtes that which is wanted for the moſt noble uſe, and which Chriſt himſelf is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a *poor* man, and look upon him as a *wretch*, when he throws away that which ſhould buy his own bread; how muſt we appear in the ſight of God, if we make a *wanton idle* uſe of that, which ſhould buy bread, and cloaths for the hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God, as we are, and fellow heirs of the ſame ſtate of future Glory? This is the ſpirit of *Miranda* and thus ſhe uſes the gifts of God; ſhe is only one of a certain number of *poor People*, that are *relieved* out of her fortune, and ſhe only differs from them in the *bleſſedneſs* of giving.

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Excepting her victuals, she never spent ten pounds a year upon herself. If you was to see her, you would wonder what poor body it was, that was so surprizingly *neat* and *clean*. She has but one rule that she observes in her dress, to be always *clean*, and in the *cheapest* things. Every thing about her resembles the purity of her soul, and she is always clean without, because she is always pure within.

Every morning sees her *early* at her Prayers, she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasure of repeating them. She seems to be as a *guardian Angel* to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep.

Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private Prayers before the light is suffer'd to enter into her sister's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half-day; the returns of her hours of Prayer, and her religious exercises, come too often to let any considerable part of time lye heavy upon her hands

When you see her at *work*, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions, she is either doing something that is necessary for her self, or necessary for others, who want to be assisted. There is scarce a

poor

poor family in the neighbourhood, but wears something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly of idle and impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observ'd in the employment of her hands, when there is no *useful* or *charitable* work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more. At her *table* she lives strictly by this rule of holy Scripture, *whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion: She eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so *regular* an abstinence, that every *meal* is an exercise of *self-denial*, and she humbles her body every time that she is forc'd to *feed* it. If *Miranda* was to run a *race* for her life, she would submit to a *diet* that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her, is a race of *holiness*, *purity*, and *heavenly* affection, which she is to finish in a corrupt, disorder'd body of earthly passions, so her every day diet has only this one end, to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of *scales*, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it

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able and willing to obey the ſoul, to join in Pſalms and Prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards Heaven with greater readineſs, ſo much is *Miranda*'s *meal.* So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes ſwell with fatneſs, or pant under a heavy load of fleſh, 'till ſhe has *changed* her religion.

The holy Scriptures, eſpecially of the new Teſtament, are her daily ſtudy; theſe ſhe reads with a watchful attention, conſtantly caſting an eye upon her ſelf, and trying her ſelf, by every doctrine that is there. When ſhe has the new Teſtament in her hand, ſhe ſuppoſes her ſelf at the feet of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and makes every thing that ſhe learns of them, ſo many laws of her life. She receives their ſacred words with as much attention, and reverence, as if ſhe ſaw their perſons, and knew that they were juſt come from Heaven, on purpoſe to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks, that the trying of her ſelf every day by the doctrines of Scripture, is the only poſſible way to be ready for her trial at the laſt day. She is ſometimes afraid that ſhe lays out too much money in books, becauſe ſhe cannot forbear buying all practical books of any note; eſpecially ſuch as enter into the *heart* of religion, and deſcribe the *inward holineſs* of the chriſtian life. But of all human writings, the lives of pious perſons, and eminent ſaints, are her greateſt delight. In theſe ſhe ſearches as for hidden treaſure, hoping to find

find ſome ſecret of holy living, ſome uncommon degree of piety, which ſhe may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and her heart ſo ſtor'd with all the principles of wiſdom and holineſs, ſhe is ſo full of the one main buſineſs of life, that ſhe finds it difficult to converſe upon any other ſubject; and if you are in her company, when ſhe thinks it proper to talk, you muſt be made wiſer and better, whether you will or no.

To relate her charity, would be to relate the hiſtory of every day for twenty years; for ſo long has all her fortune been ſpent that way. She has ſet up near twenty poor tradeſmen that had fail'd in their buſineſs, and ſaved as many from failing. She has educated ſeveral poor children, that were pick'd up in the ſtreets, and put them in a way of an honeſt employment. As ſoon as any labourer is confin'd at home with ſickneſs, ſhe ſends him, till he recovers, *twice* the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as uſual, and the other to provide things convenient for his ſickneſs.

If a family ſeems too large to be ſupported by the labour of thoſe that can work in it, ſhe pays their rent, and gives them ſomething yearly towards their cloathing. By this means there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year bleſſing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman, that is more than ordinarily wicked and reprobate,

Miranda

Miranda has her eye upon them, she watches their time of need and adversity; and if she can discover that they are in any great straights or affliction, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a very profligate person from being carry'd to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admir'd, than this temper. For this tenderness of affection towards the most abandon'd sinners, is the highest instance of a divine and godlike soul.

Miranda once passed by a house, where the *man* and his *wife* were cursing and swearing at one another in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them; this sight so much affected her compassionate mind, that she went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be ruin'd by living with such wicked parents; they now live with *Miranda*, are blessed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which she can do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in Psalms and Prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shews a turn of mind so remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for *holy orders*; that being thus sav'd himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects, as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their *misfortunes* and *accidents*; there are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a *cow*, or a *horse*, or some little *robbery*, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for *old people* that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance to such people, is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason, they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance, as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace and tranquility of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda never wants compassion, even to common beggars; especially towards those that are *old* or *sick*, or full of *sores*, that want *eyes* or *limbs*. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proof of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard, or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow creatures.

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If a poor old traveller tells her, that he has neither *ſtrength*, nor *food*, nor *money* left, ſhe never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that ſhe cannot relieve him, becauſe he may be a *cheat*, or ſhe does not know him; but ſhe relieves him for that reaſon, becauſe he is a *ſtranger*, and *unknown* to her. For it is the moſt noble part of charity to be kind and tender to thoſe whom we never ſaw before, and perhaps never may ſee again in this life. *I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in*, ſaith our bleſſed Saviour; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve perſons that are unknown to him?

Miranda conſiders, that *Lazarus* was a common beggar; that he was the care of *Angels*, and carry'd into *Abraham*'s boſom. She conſiders, that our bleſſed Saviour, and his Apoſtles, were kind to *beggars*; that they ſpoke comfortably to them, healed their diſeaſes, and reſtor'd eyes and limbs to the lame and blind. That *Peter* ſaid to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, *ſilver and gold have I none, but ſuch as I have give I thee; in the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk. Miranda*, therefore never treats beggars with diſregard and averſion, but ſhe imitates the kindneſs of our Saviour and his Apoſtles towards them; and though ſhe cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet ſhe relieves them with that power that ſhe hath; and may ſay with the Apoſtle, *ſuch as I have give I thee, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.*

It may be, ſays *Miranda*, that I may often give to thoſe that do not deſerve it, or that will make an *ill uſe* of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodneſs? Does not God make *his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good?* Is not this the very *goodneſs* that is recommended to us in Scripture, that by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, *who ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt?* And ſhall I with-hold a little *money*, or *food*, from my fellow creature, for fear he ſhould not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodneſs; and ſhall I be ſo abſurd, as to with-hold my charity from a poor brother, becauſe he may perhaps not deſerve it? ſhall I uſe a *meaſure* towards him, which I pray God never to uſe towards me?

Beſides, where has the Scripture made *merit* the rule or meaſure of charity? On the contrary, the Scripture ſaith, *if thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink.*

Now this plainly teaches us, that the *merit* of perſons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindneſs to thoſe that *leaſt* of all deſerve it. For if I am to *love* and do good to my worſt enemies; if I am to be charitable to them, notwithſtanding all their *ſpite* and *malice*, ſurely *merit* is no meaſure of charity. If I am not to with-hold my charity from ſuch bad people, and

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who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people, nor any way my enemies.

You will perhaps say, that by this means I encourage people to be *beggars*. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against *all kinds* of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against *forgiving* our enemies, for it may *encourage* people to do us hurt. The same may be said, even against the goodness of God, that by pouring his blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are *encourag'd* in their wicked ways. The same may be said against cloathing the naked, or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to *neglect* themselves, and be *careless* of their health. But when the *love of God dwelleth in you*; when it has enlarged your heart, and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When you are at any time turning away the *poor*, the *old*, the *sick* and *helpless* traveller, the *lame*, or the *blind*, ask your self this question; do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as *Lazarus*, that was carry'd by *Angels* into *Abraham*'s bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow-heirs with me in eternal Glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find

that there is none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for any one heartily to wish a poor creature so *great* a happiness, and yet not have a heart to give him a *small* alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to *all*, because I pray to God to forgive *all*; and I cannot refuse an *alms* to those, whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of *eternal glory*; but am glad to shew some degree of love to such, as I hope, will be the objects of the infinite love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assur'd us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many *friends* and *benefactors*, that come to do us a greater good than they can receive, that come to *exalt* our virtue, to be *witnesses* of our charity, to be *monuments* of our love, to be our *advocates* with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to *appear* for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

This is the spirit, and this is the life of the devout *Miranda*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent *sixty hundred* pounds in charity, for that which she allows her self, may fairly be reckon'd amongst her *alms*.

When she dies, she must shine amongst *Apostles*, and *Saints*, and *Martyrs*; she must stand amongst the *first servants* of God, and be glorious

rious amongſt thoſe that have fought the good fight, and finiſh'd their courſe with joy.

CHAP. IX.

Containing ſome reflections upon the life of Miranda, *and ſhewing how it may, and ought to be imitated by all her ſex.*

NOW this life of *Miranda*, which I heartily recommend to the imitation of her ſex, however contrary it may ſeem to the way and faſhion of the world, is yet ſuitable to the true ſpirit, and founded upon the plaineſt doctrines of chriſtianity.

To live as ſhe does, is as truly ſuitable to the Goſpel of Chriſt, as to be *baptiz'd*, or receive the *Sacrament*.

Her ſpirit is that, which animated the *Saints* of former ages; and it is becauſe they liv'd as ſhe does, that we now celebrate their memories, and praiſe God for their examples.

There is nothing that is *wimſical*, *trifling*, or *unreaſonable* in her character; but every thing there deſcrib'd, is a right and proper inſtance of a ſolid and real piety.

It is as eaſy to ſhew, that it is *whimſical* to go to church, or to ſay ones prayers, as that it is whimſical to obſerve any of theſe rules of life. For all *Miranda*'s rules of living unto God, of ſpending her *time* and *fortune*, of

eating, working, dressing, and conversing, are as substantial parts of a reasonable and holy life, as devotion and prayer.

For there is nothing to be said, for the wisdom of *sobriety*, the wisdom of *devotion*, the wisdom of *charity*, or the wisdom of *humility*, but what is as good an argument for the wise and reasonable use of *apparel*.

Neither can any thing be said against the folly of *luxury*, the folly of *sensuality*, the folly of *extravagance*, the folly of *prodigality*, the folly of *ambition*, of *idleness*, or *indulgence*, but what must be said against the folly of *dress*. For religion is as deeply concerned in the one, as in the other.

If you may be vain in one thing, you may be vain in every thing; for one kind of vanity only differs from another, as one kind of intemperance differs from another.

If you spend your fortune in the needless vain finery of dress, you cannot condemn prodigality, or extravagance, or luxury, without condemning your self.

If you fancy that it is your *only folly*, and that therefore there can be no great matter in it; you are like those that think they are only guilty of the folly of covetousness, or the folly of ambition. Now though some people may live so plausible a life, as to appear chargeable with no other fault, than that of covetousness or ambition; yet the case is not as it appears, for covetousness or ambition cannot subsist in a heart that is in other respects rightly devoted to God.

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In like manner, though ſome people may ſpend moſt that they have in needleſs expenſive ornaments of dreſs, and yet ſeem to be in every other reſpect truly pious, yet it is certainly falſe, for it is as impoſſible for a mind that is in a *true ſtate* of religion, to be vain in the uſe of cloaths, as to be vain in the uſe of *alms*, or *devotions*. Now to convince you of this from your own reflections, let us ſuppoſe that ſome *eminent ſaint*, as for inſtance, that the holy *Virgin Mary* was ſent into the world, to be again in a ſtate of trial for a few years, and that you was going to her, to be edify'd by her great piety. Would you expect to find her dreſs'd out and adorn'd in fine and expenſive cloaths? No. You would know in your own mind, that it was as impoſſible, as to find her learning to *dance*. Do but add *ſaint*, or *holy*, to any perſon, either *man*, or *woman*, and your own mind tells you immediately, that ſuch a character cannot admit of the vanity of fine apparel. A *ſaint* genteely dreſs'd, is as great nonſenſe, as an *Apoſtle* in an *embroider'd ſuit*; every ones own natural ſenſe convinces him of the inconſiſtency of theſe things.

Now what is the reaſon, that when you think of a *ſaint*, or *eminent* ſervant of God, you cannot admit of the vanity of apparel? Is it not becauſe it is inconſiſtent with ſuch a right ſtate of heart, ſuch true and exalted piety? And is not this therefore, a demonſtration, that where ſuch vanity is admitted,

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there a right ſtate of heart, true and exalted piety muſt needs be wanted? For as certainly as the holy *Virgin Mary* could not indulge her ſelf, or conform to the vanity of the world in *dreſs* and *figure*; ſo certain is it, that none can indulge themſelves in this vanity, but thoſe who want her piety of heart? and conſequently it muſt be own'd, that all needleſs and expenſive finery of dreſs, is the effect of a diſorder'd heart, that is not governed by the true ſpirit of religion.

Covetouſneſs is not a crime, becauſe there is any harm in *gold or ſilver*, but becauſe it ſuppoſes a fooliſh and unreaſonable ſtate of mind, that is fallen from its true good, and ſunk into ſuch a poor and wretched ſatisfaction.

In like manner the *expenſive finery* of dreſs is not a crime, becauſe there is any thing good or evil in cloaths, but becauſe the expenſive ornaments of cloathing ſhews a *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* ſtate of heart, that is fallen from right notions of human nature, that abuſes the end of cloathing, and turns the neceſſities of life, into ſo many inſtances of pride and folly.

All the world agree in condemning *remarkable fops*. Now what is the reaſon of it? Is it becauſe there is any thing ſinful in their *particular dreſs*, or *affected* manners? No: but it is becauſe all people know, that it ſhews the ſtate of a man's mind, and that it is impoſſible for ſo ridiculous an outſide to have any thing wiſe, or reaſonable, or good within.

And

And indeed to ſuppoſe a fop of *great piety*, is as much nonſenſe, as to ſuppoſe a coward of *great courage*. So that all the world agree in owning, that the *uſe* and *manner* of cloaths is a mark of the ſtate of a man's mind, and conſequently that it is a thing highly eſſential to religion. But then it ſhould be well conſidered, that as it is not only the *ſot* that is guilty of intemperance, but every one that tranſgreſſes the *right* and *religious* meaſures of eating and drinking; ſo it ſhould be conſidered, that it is not only the *fop* that is guilty of the vanity and abuſe of dreſs, but every one that departs from the reaſonable and religious ends of cloathing.

As therefore every argument againſt *ſottiſhneſs* is as good an argument againſt *all kinds* of intemperance; ſo every argument againſt the vanity of *fops*, is as good an argument againſt *all vanity* and abuſe of dreſs. For they are all of the ſame kind, and only differ, as one degree of intemperance may differ from another. She that only *paints* a little, may as juſtly accuſe another, becauſe ſhe paints a great deal; as ſhe that uſes but a common finery of dreſs, accuſe another that is exceſſive in her finery.

For as in the matter of temperance, there is *no rule*, but the ſobriety, that is according to the doctrines and ſpirit of our religion; ſo in the matter of apparel, there is *no rule* to be obſerved, but ſuch a right uſe of cloaths, as is ſtrictly according to the doctrines and ſpirit of

of our religion. To pretend to make the *way of* the world our measure in these things, is as weak and absurd, as to make the way of the world the measure of our sobriety, abstinence, or humility. It is a pretence that is exceedingly absurd in the mouths of Christians, who are to be so far from conforming to the fashions of this life, that to have *overcome the world*, is made an essential mark of Christianity.

This therefore is the way that you are to judge of the crime of vain apparel: You are to consider it as an offence against the *proper use* of cloaths, as covetousness is an offence against the proper use of money; you are to consider it as an indulgence of *proud* and *unreasonable* tempers, as an offence against the *humility* and *sobriety* of the Christian spirit; you are to consider it as an offence against all those doctrines that require you to do all to the *glory* of God, that require you to make a *right use* of your talents; you are to consider it as an offence against all those texts of Scripture, that commands you to *love* your neighbour as yourself, to *feed* the hungry, to *cloath* the naked, and do *all works* of charity that you are able: so that you must not deceive yourself with saying, Where can be the harm of *cloaths?* for the covetous man might as well say, Where can be the harm of *gold* or *silver?* but you must consider, that it is a great deal of harm to want that *wise*, and *reasonable*, and *humble* state of heart, which is accord-

according to the ſpirit of religion, and which no one can have in the manner that he ought to have it, who indulges himſelf either in the *vanity* of dreſs, or the *deſire* of riches.

There is therefore nothing right in the uſe of *cloaths*, or in the uſe of any thing elſe in the world, but the *plaineſt* and *ſimplicity* of the Goſpel. Every other uſe of things (however polite and faſhionable in the world) diſtracts and diſorders the heart, and is inconſiſtent with that inward ſtate of piety, that purity of heart, that wiſdom of mind, and regularity of affection, which Chriſtianity requireth.

If you would be a good Chriſtian, there is but one way, you muſt *live* wholly unto God; and if you would live wholly unto God, you muſt live according to the wiſdom that comes from God; you muſt act according to right judgments of the nature and value of things; you muſt live in the exerciſe of holy and heavenly affections, and uſe all the gifts of God to his praiſe and glory.

Some perſons perhaps, who admire the purity and perfection of this life of *Miranda*, may ſay, How can it be propos'd as a common example? How can we who are marry'd, or we who are under the direction of our parents, imitate ſuch a life?

It is anſwered, Juſt as you may imitate the life of our bleſſed Saviour and his apoſtles. The circumſtances of our Saviour's life, and the ſtate and condition of his apoſtles, was

more

more different from yours than that of *Miranda*'s is; and yet their life, the purity and perfection of their behaviour, is the common example that is proposed to all Christians.

It is their *spirit* therefore, their piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life.

Act under God as they did, direct your common actions to that end which they did, glorify your proper state with such love of God, such charity to your neighbour, such humility and self-denial, as they did; and then, though you are only teaching your own children, and St. *Paul* is converting whole nations, yet you are following his steps, and acting after his example.

Don't think therefore that you can't, or need not be like *Miranda*, because you are not in her state of life; for as the same spirit and temper would have made *Miranda* a saint, though she had been forc'd to labour for a maintenance, so if you will but aspire after her spirit and temper, every *form* and *condition* of life will furnish you with sufficient means of employing it.

Miranda is what she is, because she does every thing in the name, and with regard to her duty to God; and when you do the same you will be exactly like her, though you are never so different from her in the outward state of your life.

You are marry'd, you say; therefore you have not your *time* and *fortune* in your power as she has. It

It is very true; and therefore you cannot ſpend *ſo much* time, nor *ſo much* money, in the manner that ſhe does.

But now *Miranda*'s perfection does not conſiſt in this, that ſhe ſpends *ſo much* time, or *ſo much* money in ſuch a manner, but that ſhe is careful to make the beſt uſe of all that time, and all that fortune, which God has put into her hands. Do you therefore make the beſt uſe of all that time and money which is in your diſpoſal, and then you are like *Miranda*.

If ſhe has *two hundred* pounds a year, and you have only *two mites*, have you not the more reaſon to be exceeding exact in the wiſeſt uſe of it? If ſhe has a great deal of time, and you have but a little, ought you not to be the more *watchful* and *circumſpect*, leſt that *little* ſhould be loſt?

You ſay, if you was to imitate the *cleanly plainneſs* and *cheapneſs* of her dreſs, you ſhould offend your *huſbands*.

Firſt, Be very ſure that this is *true*, before you make it an *excuſe*.

Secondly, If your *huſbands* do really require you to *patch* your faces, to expoſe your breaſts *naked*, and to be *fine* and *expenſive* in all your *apparel*, then take theſe two reſolutions:

Firſt, To forbear from all this, as ſoon as your *huſbands* will *permit* you.

Secondly, To uſe your utmoſt endeavours to recommend your ſelves to their affections by ſuch *ſolid virtues*, as may correct the *vanity* of their

their minds, and teach them to love you for ſuch qualities, as will make you amiable in the ſight of God and his holy angels.

As to this doctrine concerning the plainneſs and modeſty of dreſs, it may perhaps be thought by ſome to be ſufficiently confuted by aſking, whether all perſons are to be cloathed in the *ſame manner?*

Theſe queſtions are generally put by thoſe, who had rather perplex the plaineſt truths, than be obliged to follow them.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that I had recommended an univerſal plainneſs of *diet*. It is not a thing ſufficiently reaſonable to be *univerſally* recommended? But would it thence follow, that the *nobleman* and the *labourer* were to live upon the *ſame food?*

Suppoſe I had preſſed an *univerſal temperance*, does not religion enough juſtify ſuch a doctrine? But would it therefore follow, that all people were to drink the *ſame liquors*, and in the ſame *quantity?*

In like manner, though *plainneſs* and *ſobriety* of dreſs is recommended to *all*, yet it does by no means follow, that all are to be cloathed in the *ſame manner*.

Now what is the *particular rule* with regard to temperance? How ſhall particular perſons that uſe *different liquors*, and in different *quantities*, preſerve their temperance?

Is not this the rule? Are they not to *guard* againſt *indulgence*, to make their uſe of liquors a *matter of conſcience*, and allow of *no refreſh-*

ments,

ments, but such as are consistent with the *strictest rules* of Christian sobriety?

Now transfer this *rule* to the matter of *apparel*, and all questions about it are answer'd.

Let every one but guard against the *vanity* of dress, let them but make their *use* of cloaths a *matter of conscience*, let them but desire to make the *best use* of their money, and then every one has a rule that is sufficient to direct them in every state of life. This rule will no more let the great be *vain* in their *dress*, than *intemperate* in their *liquors*; and yet will leave it as lawful to have *some difference* in their apparel, as to have some difference in their drink.

But now will you say, that you may use the *finest*, *richest wines*, when, and as you please; that you may be as *expensive* in them as you have a mind, because *different liquors* are allow'd? If not, how can it be said, that you may use *cloaths* as you please, and wear the *richest* things you can get, because the *bare difference* of cloaths is lawful?

For as the lawfulness of different liquors leaves no *room*, nor any *excuse* for the *smallest degrees* of intemperance in drinking, so the lawfulness of different apparel leaves no room, nor any excuse for the smallest degrees of *vanity* in dress.

To ask what is *vanity* in *dress*, is no more a puzzling question, than to ask, what is *intemperance* in *drinking*. And though Religion does not here state the *particular measure*

for all individuals, yet it gives ſuch *general rules*, as are a ſufficient direction in every ſtate of life.

He that lets Religion teach him, that the *end* of drinking is only ſo far to refreſh our *ſpirits*, as to keep us in *good health*, and make *ſoul* and *body* fitter for all the offices of a *holy* and *pious* life, and that he is to deſire to *glorify* God by a *right* uſe of this *liberty*, will always know what *intemperance* is, in his particular ſtate.

So he that lets Religion teach him that the *end* of cloathing is only to hide our *ſhame* and *nakedneſs*, and to ſecure our bodies from the injuries of *weather*, and that he is to deſire to *glorify* God by a *ſober* and *wiſe* uſe of this *neceſſity*, will always know what *vanity* of dreſs is, in his particular ſtate.

And he that thinks it a *needleſs nicety*, to talk of the *religious uſe* of apparel, has as much reaſon to think it a needleſs nicety, to talk of the religious uſe of *liquors*. For luxury and indulgence in *dreſs*, is as great an *abuſe*, as luxury and indulgence in *eating* and drinking. And there is no avoiding either of them, but by making religion the *ſtrict meaſure* of our allowance in both caſes. And there is nothing in Religion to excite a man to this *pious exactneſs* in one caſe, but what is as good a motive to the ſame exactneſs in the other.

Farther, as all things that are *lawful*, are not therefore *expedient*, ſo there are ſome things lawful

lawful in the uſe of *liquors* and *apparel*, which by abſtaining from them for *pious ends*, may be made means of great perfection.

Thus for inſtance, if a man ſhould deny himſelf ſuch uſe of liquors as is *lawful*; if he ſhould refrain from ſuch *expence* in his drink as might be allow'd without ſin; if he ſhould do this, not only for the ſake of a more *pious ſelf-denial*, but that he might be able to relieve and refreſh the helpleſs, poor, and ſick.

If another ſhould abſtain from the uſe of that which is *lawful* in *dreſs*, if he ſhould be more *frugal* and *mean* in his habit, than the neceſſities of religion *abſolutely* require; if he ſhould do this not only as a means of a *better humility*, but that he may be more able to *cloath* other People; theſe perſons might be ſaid to do that which was highly ſuitable to the *true ſpirit*, though not *abſolutely* requir'd by the *letter* of the law of Chriſt.

For if thoſe *who give a cup of cold water to a diſciple of Chriſt, ſhall not loſe their reward*, how dear muſt they be to Chriſt, who often give themſelves water, that they may be able to give *wine* to the ſick and languiſhing members of Chriſt's body!

But to return. All that has been here ſaid to *marry'd* women, may ſerve for the ſame inſtruction to ſuch as are ſtill under the direction of their *Parents*.

Now though the obedience which is due to parents, does not oblige them to carry their virtues no higher then their parents require them; yet their obedience requires them to ſubmit to their direction in all things not contrary to the laws of God.

If therefore, your parents require you to live more in the *faſhion* and *converſation* of the world, or to be more *expenſive* in your dreſs and perſon, or to diſpoſe of your time otherwiſe than ſuits with your deſires after *greater perfection*, you muſt ſubmit, and bear it as your *croſs*, till you are at liberty to follow the higher councils of Chriſt, and have it in your power to chuſe the beſt ways of raiſing your virtue to its greateſt height.

Now although whilſt you are in this ſtate, you may be oblig'd to forego *ſome means* of improving your virtue, yet there are ſome others to be found in it, that are not to be had in a life of more liberty.

For if in this ſtate, where *obedience* is ſo great a virtue, you comply in all things lawful, out of a *pious*, *tender* ſenſe of duty, then thoſe things which you thus perform, are inſtead of being hindrances of your virtue, turn'd into means of improving it.

What you loſe by being reſtrain'd from ſuch things, as you would chuſe to obſerve, you *gain* by that excellent virtue of obedience, in humbly complying againſt your temper.

Now

Now what is here granted, is only in things *lawful*; and therefore the diverſion of our *Engliſh ſtage* is here excepted; being elſewhere prov'd, as I think, to be *abſolutely unlawful*.

Thus much to ſhew, how perſons under the direction of others, may imitate the wiſe and pious life of *Miranda*.

But as for thoſe who are altogether in their own hands, if the liberty of their ſtate makes them covet the *beſt gifts*, if it carries them to chuſe the *moſt excellent* ways, if they having all in their own power, ſhould turn the whole form of their life into a regular exerciſe of the higheſt virtues, happy are they who have ſo learned Chriſt,

All perſons cannot receive this ſaying. They that are able to receive it, let them receive it, and bleſs that Spirit of God which has put ſuch good motions into their hearts.

God may be ſerv'd, and glorified in every ſtate of life. But as there are ſome ſtates of life more deſirable than others, that more purify our natures, that more improve our virtues, and dedicate us unto God in a higher manner, ſo thoſe who are at liberty to chuſe for themſelves, ſeem to be called by God to be more eminently devoted to his ſervice,

Ever ſince the beginning of Chriſtianity, there hath been two *orders*, or *ranks* of People amongſt good Chriſtians.

The *one* that fear'd and ſerv'd God in the *common offices* and buſineſs of a ſecular worldly life.

The *other* renouncing the common buſineſs and common enjoyments of life, as *riches*, *marriage*, *honours*, and *pleaſures*, devoted themſelves to *voluntary poverty*, *virginity*, *devotion*, and *retirement*, that by this means they might live wholly unto God in the daily exerciſe of a divine and heavenly life.

This teſtimony I have from the famous eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian *Euſebius*, who liv'd at the time of the *firſt general council*, when the faith of our *nicene Creed* was eſtabliſh'd, when the Church was in its greateſt *glory* and *purity*, when its Biſhops were ſo many holy *fathers*, and eminent *ſaints*.

" Therefore ſaith he, there hath been inſti-
" tuted in the Church of Chriſt, *two ways*,
" or *manners*, of living. The *one* rais'd above
" the ordinary ſtate of nature, and common
" ways of living, rejects *wedlock*, *poſſeſſions*,
" and *worldly goods*, and being wholly ſepa-
" rate and remov'd from the ordinary con-
" verſation of common life, is appropriated
" and devoted ſolely to the worſhip and ſer-
" vice of God, through an *exceeding degree of*
" *heavenly love*.

" They who are of this *order* of people,
" ſeem dead to the life of this world, and ha-
" ving their *bodies* only upon *earth*, are in
" their *minds*, and *contemplations* dwelling in
" heaven. From whence, like ſo many hea-
" venly

" venly inhabitants they look down upon " human life, making *intercessions* and *oblati-* " *ons*, to Almighty God for the whole race of " mankind. And this not with the *blood* of " beasts, or the fat, or smoak, and burning " of *bodies*, but with the highest exercises of " true piety, with cleans'd and purified hearts, " and with an whole form of life strictly de- " voted to virtue. These are their sacrifices, " which they continually offering unto God, " implore his mercy and favour for themselves " and their fellow creatures.

" Christianity receives this as the perfect " manner of life.

" The other is of a lower form, and suiting " it self more to the condition of human na- " ture, admits of *chaste wedlock*, the care of " children and family, of trade and business, " and goes through all the employments of " life under a sense of piety, and fear of " God.

" Now they who have chosen this manner " of life, have their set times for *retirement* " and *spiritual exercises*, and particular days " are set apart for their hearing " and learning the word of God. *Euseb. Dem. Evan. l. 1. c. 8.* " And this order of people are " consider'd, as in the *second state* of piety.

Thus this learned historian.

If therefore persons, of either sex, mov'd with the life of *Miranda*, and desirous of perfection, should unite themselves into little societies, professing *voluntary poverty*, *virgini-*

ty, retirement and *devotion*, living upon *bare necessaries*, that *some* might be reliev'd by their *charities*, and *all* be blessed with their prayers, and benefited by their *example:* Or if for want of this, they should practise the same manner of life, in as high a degree as they could by themselves; such persons would be so far from being chargeable with any *superstition*, or *blind devotion*, that they might be justly said to restore *that piety*, which was the *boast* and *glory* of the Church, when its greatest *saints* were alive.

Now as this *learned historian* observes, that it was an *exceeding great degree of heavenly love*, that carried these persons, so much above the *common ways* of life, to such an eminent state of holiness; so it is not to be wonder'd at, that the Religion of Jesus Christ, should fill the hearts of many Christians with this *high degree* of love.

For a Religion that opens such a scene of Glory, that discovers things so infinitely above all the world, that so triumphs over death, that assures us of such mansions of bliss, where we shall so soon be as the *Angels* of God in Heaven; what wonder is it, if such a Religion, such truths and expectations, should in some holy souls, destroy all earthly desires, and make the ardent love of heavenly things, be the one continual passion of their hearts?

If the Religion of Christians is founded upon the infinite *humiliation*, the cruel *mockings* and *scourgings*, the prodigious *sufferings*, the

poor

poor, perſecuted life and painful death of a crucified Son of God; what wonder is it, if many *humble adorers* of this profound myſtery, many *affectionate lovers* of a crucified Lord, ſhould renounce their ſhare of worldly pleaſures, and give themſelves up to a continual courſe of mortification and ſelf-denial: That thus ſuffering with Chriſt here, they may reign with him hereafter?

If *truth* itſelf hath aſſur'd us, that *there is but one thing needful*, what wonder is it, that there ſhould be ſome amongſt Chriſtians, ſo full of faith, as to believe this in the higheſt ſenſe of the words, and to deſire ſuch a ſeparation from the world, that their care and attention to the one thing needful may not be interrupted?

If our bleſſed Lord, hath ſaid, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: And come and follow me:* What wonder is it, that there ſhould be amongſt Chriſtians, ſome ſuch zealous followers of Chriſt, ſo intent upon heavenly treaſure, ſo deſirous of perfection, that they ſhould renounce the enjoyment of their eſtates, chuſe a voluntary poverty, and relieve all the poor that they are able?

If the *choſen veſſel*, St. *Paul*, hath ſaid, *He that is unmarry'd careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord: And that there is this difference alſo between a wife and a virgin; the unmarry'd woman careth for the things of the Lord, that ſhe may be ho-*

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ly both in body and Spirit: What wonder is it, if the purity and perfection of the virgin ſtate, hath been the praiſe and glory of the Church in its firſt and pureſt ages?

That there hath always been ſome ſo *deſirous* of pleaſing God, ſo zealous after *every degree* of purity and perfection, ſo glad of *every means* of improving their virtue, that they have renounc'd the comforts and enjoyments of wedlock, to trim their *lamps*, to purify their ſouls, and wait upon God in a ſtate of perpetual virginity?

And if now in theſe our days, we want examples of theſe *ſeveral degrees* of perfection, if neither *Clergy*, nor *laity* are *enough* of this ſpirit; if we are ſo far departed from it, that a man ſeems, like St. *Paul* at *Athens*, a *ſetter forth of ſtrange doctrines*, when he recommends *ſelf-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *regular devotion*, *retirement*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, 'tis becauſe we are fallen into an age, where the *love not only of many*, but of moſt, *is waxed cold.*

I have made this little appeal to *Antiquity*, and quoted theſe few paſſages of Scripture, to ſupport ſome uncommon practices in the life of *Miranda*; and to ſhew, that her higheſt rules of holy living, her *devotion*, *ſelf-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, her *charity*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, are founded in the *ſublimeſt councils* of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, ſuitable to the *high expectations* of another life, proper inſtances of a *heavenly love*, and all

all follow'd by the *greateſt ſaints* of the beſt and pureſt ages of the Church.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

CHAP. X.

Shewing how all orders and ranks of men and women of all ages, are obliged to devote themſelves unto God.

I Have in the foregoing Chapters gone through the ſeveral great inſtances of Chriſtian devotion, and ſhewn that all the parts of our common life, our *employments*, our *talents* and gifts of *fortune*, are all to be made holy and acceptable unto God, by a wiſe and religious uſe of every thing, and by directing our actions and deſigns to ſuch ends, as are ſuitable to the honour and glory of God.

I ſhall now ſhew, that this regularity of devotion, this holineſs of common life, this religious uſe of every thing, that we have, is a devotion that is the duty of all orders of Chriſtian people.

Fulvius has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the *Univerſity*, he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any buſineſs, becauſe he thinks that every employment or buſineſs, calls

calls people to the careful performance and juſt diſcharge of its ſeveral duties. When he is grave, he will tell you that he did not enter into holy orders, becauſe he looks upon it to be a ſtate, that requires great holineſs of life, and that it does not ſuit his temper to be ſo good. He will tell you that he never intends to marry, becauſe he cannot oblige himſelf to that regularity of life, and good behaviour, which he takes to be the duty of thoſe that are at the head of a family. He refuſed to be *Godfather* to his nephew, becauſe he will have no *truſt* of any kind to anſwer for.

Fulvius thinks that he is conſcientious in this conduct, and is therefore con ent with the moſt *idle*, *impertinent* and *careleſs* life.

He has no Religion, no Devotion, no pretences to Piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, becauſe he is neither a *prieſt*, nor a *father*, nor a *guardian*, nor has any *employment* or *family* to look after.

But *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as ſuch, are as much obliged to live according to *reaſon* and *order*, as a *prieſt* is obliged to attend at the *altar*, or a *guardian* to be faithful to his truſt; if you live contrary to *reaſon*, you don't commit a ſmall crime; you don't break a ſmall truſt; but you break the *law* of your nature, you rebel againſt God who gave you that nature, and put your ſelf amongſt thoſe whom the God of *reaſon* and *order* will puniſh as *apoſtates* and *deſerters*.

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Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptis'd into the profeſſion of Chriſt's religion, you are as much oblig'd to live according to the holineſs of the chriſtian ſpirit, and perform all the promiſes made at your baptiſm, as any man is oblig'd to be honeſt and faithful in his calling. If you abuſe this great calling, you are not falſe in a ſmall matter, but you abuſe the precious blood of Chriſt; you crucify the Son of God afreſh; you neglect the higheſt inſtances of divine goodneſs; you disgrace the church of God; you blemiſh the body of Chriſt; you abuſe the means of Grace, and the promiſes of Glory; and it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *at the day of judgment*, *than for you*.

It is therefore great folly, for any one to think himſelf at liberty to live as he pleaſes, becauſe he is not in ſuch a ſtate of life as ſome others are: For if there is any thing dreadful in the abuſe of any *truſt*; if there is any thing to be feared for the neglect of any calling, there is nothing more to be fear'd than the wrong uſe of our *reaſon*, nor any thing more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our *chriſtian calling*; which is not to ſerve the little uſes of a ſhort life, but to redeem ſouls unto God, to fill Heaven with ſaints, and finiſh a kingdom of eternal Glory unto God.

No man therefore, muſt think himſelf excuſed from the *exactneſs* of piety and morality, becauſe he has choſen to be *idle* and *independent*

dependent in the world; for the *neceſſities* of a reaſonable and holy life, are not founded in the ſeveral conditions and employments of this life, but in the immutable nature of God, and the nature of man. A man is not to be reaſonable and holy, becauſe he is a *prieſt*, or a *father* of a family; but he is to be a pious prieſt, and a good father, becauſe piety and goodneſs are the *laws* of human nature. Could any man pleaſe God, without living according to *reaſon* and *order*, there would be nothing diſpleaſing to God in an *idle* prieſt, or a *reprobate* father. He therefore, that abuſes his *reaſon* is like him that abuſes the *prieſthood*; and he that neglects the holineſs of the *chriſtian life*, is as the man that diſregards the moſt *important truſt*.

If a man was to chuſe to put out his *eyes*, rather than enjoy the light, and ſee the works of God, if he ſhould voluntarily kill himſelf, by refuſing to eat and drink, every one would own, that ſuch a one was a rebel againſt God, that juſtly deſerved his higheſt indignation. You would not ſay, that this was only ſinful in a *prieſt*, or a *maſter* of a family, but in every man as ſuch.

Now wherein does the ſinfulneſs of this behaviour conſiſt? Does it not conſiſt in this, that he abuſes his *nature*, and refuſes to act that part for which God had created him? But if this be true, then all perſons that abuſe their *reaſon*, that act a different part from that for which God created them, are like this man

rebels

rebels againſt God, and on the ſame account ſubject to his wrath.

Let us ſuppoſe that this man, inſtead of putting out his eyes, had only employ'd them in looking at *ridiculous things*, or ſhut them up in *ſleep*; that inſtead of *ſtarving* himſelf to death, by not eating at all, he ſhould turn every meal into a *feaſt*, and eat and drink like an *Epicure*; could he be ſaid to have liv'd more to the glory of God? could he any more be ſaid to act the part for which God had created him, than if he had put out his eyes, and ſtarved himſelf to death?

Now do but ſuppoſe a man acting unreaſonably; do but ſuppoſe him extinguiſhing his *reaſon*, inſtead of putting out his *eyes*, and living in a courſe of folly and impertinence, inſtead of ſtarving himſelf to death; and then you have found out as *great a rebel* againſt God.

For he that puts out his eyes, or murders himſelf, has only this guilt, that he abuſes the powers that God has given him; that he refuſes to act that part for which he was created, and puts himſelf into a ſtate that is contrary to the divine will. And ſurely this is the guilt of every one that lives an unreaſonable, unholy, and fooliſh life.

As therefore, no particular ſtate, or private life, is an excuſe for the abuſe of our *bodies*, or *ſelf-murder*, ſo no particular ſtate, or private life, is an excuſe for the abuſe of our reaſon, or the neglect of the holineſs of the chriſtian religion. For ſurely it is as much

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the will of God that we ſhould make the beſt uſe of our rational faculties, that we ſhould conform to the purity and holineſs of chriſtianity, as it is the will of God, that we ſhould uſe our eyes, and eat and drink for the preſervation of our lives.

'Till therefore, a man can ſhew, that he ſincerely endeavours to live according to the will of God, to be that which God requires him to be; 'till ſhe can ſhew that he is ſtriving to live according to the holineſs of the chriſtian religion; whoſoever he be, or whereſoever he be, he has all that to anſwer for, that they have, who refuſe to live, who abuſe the greateſt truſts, and neglect the higheſt calling in the world.

Every body acknowledges, that all orders of men are to be equally and exactly *honeſt* and *faithful*; there is no exception to be made in theſe duties, for any private or particular ſtate of life. Now if we would but attend to the reaſon and nature of things; if we would but conſider the nature of God, and the nature of man, we ſhould find the ſame neceſſity for every other right uſe of our reaſon, for every grace, or religious temper of the chriſtian life: We ſhould find it as abſurd to ſuppoſe, that one man muſt be exact in piety, and another need not, as to ſuppoſe that one man muſt be exact in *honeſty*, but another need not. For chriſtian *humility*, *ſobriety*, *devotion*, and *piety*, are as great and neceſſary parts of a reaſonable life, as *juſtice* and *honeſty*.

And

And on the other hand, *pride*, *ſenſuality*, and *covetouſneſs*, are as great diſorders of the ſoul, are as high an abuſe of our reaſon, and as contrary to God, as *cheating* and *diſhoneſty*.

Theft and *diſhoneſty* ſeem indeed, to vulgar eyes, to be greater ſins, becauſe they are ſo hurtful to civil ſociety, and are ſo ſeverely puniſh'd by human laws.

But if we conſider mankind in a higher view, as God's *order* or *ſociety* of rational beings, that are to glorify him by the right uſe of their reaſon, and by acting conformably to the order of their nature, we ſhall find, that every temper that is equally contrary to reaſon and order, that oppoſes God's ends and deſigns, and diſorders the beauty and glory of the rational world, is equally ſinful in man, and equally odious to God. This would ſhew us, that the ſin of *ſenſuality* is like the ſin of *diſhoneſty*, and renders us as great objects of the divine diſpleaſure.

Again, if we conſider mankind in a farther view, as a redeemed order of *fallen ſpirits*, that are baptis'd into a fellowſhip with the Son of God; to be temples of the Holy Ghoſt; to live according to his holy inſpirations; to offer to God the reaſonable ſacrifice of an humble, pious, and thankful life; to purify themſelves from the diſorders of their fall; to make a right uſe of the means of grace, in order to be ſons of eternal glory: If we look at mankind in this true light, then

we ſhall find, that all tempers that are contrary to this holy ſociety, that are abuſes of this infinite mercy; all actions that make us unlike to Chriſt, that diſgrace his body, that abuſe the means of grace, and oppoſe our hopes of glory, have every thing in them, that can make us for ever odious unto God. So that though *pride* and *ſenſuality*, and other vices of the like kind, do not hurt civil ſociety, as *cheating* and *diſhoneſty* do; yet they hurt that ſociety, and oppoſe thoſe ends, which are greater and more glorious in the eyes of God, than all the ſocieties that relate to this world.

Nothing therefore, can be more falſe, than to imagine, that becauſe we are private perſons, that have taken upon us no charge or employment of life, that therefore we may live more at large, indulge our appetites, and be leſs careful of the duties of piety and holineſs; for it is as good an excuſe for *cheating* and *diſhoneſty*. Becauſe he that abuſes his *reaſon*, that indulges himſelf in *luſt* and *ſenſuality*, and neglects to act the wiſe and reaſonable part of a true chriſtian, has every thing in his life to render him hateful to God, that is to be found in *cheating* and *diſhoneſty*.

If therefore, you rather chuſe to be an *idle Epicure*, than to be *unfaithful*; if you rather chuſe to live in *luſt* and *ſenſuality*, than to injure your neighbour in his goods, you have made no better a proviſion for the favour

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of God, than he that rather chuſes to rob a *houſe*, than to rob a *church*.

For the abuſing of our own nature, is as great a diſobedience againſt God, as the injuring our neighbour; and he that wants piety towards God, has done as much to damn himſelf, as he that wants honeſty towards men. Every argument therefore, that proves it neceſſary for all men, in all ſtations of life, to be truly honeſt, proves it equally neceſſary for all men, in all ſtations of life, to be truly holy and pious, and do all things in ſuch a manner, as is ſuitable to the glory of God.

Again, another argument to prove that all orders of men are obliged to be thus holy and devout in the common courſe of their lives, in the uſe of every thing that they enjoy, may be taken from our obligation to *prayer*.

It is granted, that *prayer* is a duty that belongs to all ſtates and conditions of men; now if we enquire into the reaſon of this, why no ſtate of life is to be excuſed from prayer, we ſhall find it as good a reaſon, why every ſtate of life is to be made a ſtate of piety and holineſs in all its parts.

For the reaſon why we are to pray unto God, and praiſe him with Hymns, and Pſalms of Thankſgiving, is this, becauſe we are to live wholly unto God, and glorify him all poſſible ways. It is not becauſe the praiſes of *words*, or *forms* of thankſgiving, are more particularly parts of piety, or more the worſhip of God than other things; but it

is becauſe they are poſſible ways, of expreſſing our dependance, our obedience and devotion to God. Now, if this be the reaſon of verbal praiſes and thankſgivings to God, becauſe we are to live unto God all poſſible ways, then it plainly follows, that we are equally obliged to worſhip, and glorify God in all other actions, that can be turned into acts of piety and obedience to him. And as actions are of much more ſignificancy than words, it muſt be a much more acceptable worſhip of God, to glorify him in all the actions of our common life, than with any little form of words at any particular times.

Thus, If God is to be worſhipped with forms of thankſgivings, he that makes it a rule to be content and thankful in every part and accident of his life, becauſe it comes from God, praiſes God in a much higher manner, than he that has ſome ſet time for ſinging of Pſalms. He that dares not ſay an ill-natur'd word, or do an unreaſonable thing, becauſe he conſiders God as every-where preſent, performs a better devotion than he that dares not miſs the church. To live in the world as a ſtranger and a pilgrim, uſing all its enjoyments as if we uſed them not, making all our actions ſo many ſteps towards a better life, is offering a better ſacrifice to God, than any forms of holy and heavenly prayers.

To be humble in all our actions, to avoid every appearance of pride and vanity, to be

meek

meek and lowly in our words, actions, dress, behaviour and designs, in imitation of our blessed Saviour, is worshipping God in a higher manner, than they who have only *times* to fall low on their knees in devotions. He that contents himself with *necessaries*, that he may give the *remainder* to those that want it; that dares not to spend any money foolishly, because he considers it as a talent from God, which must be used according to his will, praises God with something that is more glorious than songs of praise.

He that has appointed times for the use of wise and pious prayers, performs a proper instance of devotion; but he that allows himself no times, nor any places, nor any actions, but such as are strictly conformable to wisdom and holiness, worships the divine nature with the most true and substantial devotion. For who does not know, that it is better to be pure and holy, than to *talk* about purity and holiness? Nay, who does not know, that a man is to be reckon'd no farther pure, or holy, or just, than as he is pure, and holy, and just in the common course of his life? But if this be plain, then it is also plain, that it is better to be holy, than to have holy prayers.

Prayers therefore are so far from being a sufficient devotion, that they are the smallest parts of it. We are to praise God with words and prayers, because it is a possible way of glorifying God, who has given us such faculties, as may be so used. But then as words

are but ſmall things in themſelves, as times of prayer are but little, if compar'd with the reſt of our lives; ſo that devotion which conſiſts in times and forms of prayer, is but a very ſmall thing, if compared to that devotion which is to appear in every other part and circumſtance of our lives.

Again; as it is an eaſy thing to worſhip God with forms of words, and to obſerve times of offering them unto him, ſo it is the ſmalleſt kind of piety.

And, on the other hand, as it is more difficult to worſhip God with our ſubſtance, to honour him with the right uſe of our time, to offer to him the continual ſacrifice of ſelf-denial and mortification; as it requires more piety to eat and drink only for ſuch ends as may glorify God, to undertake no labour, nor allow of any diverſion, but where we can act in the name of God; as it is moſt difficult to ſacrifice all our corrupt tempers, correct all our paſſions, and make piety to God the rule and meaſure of all the actions of our common life: ſo the devotion of this kind is a much more acceptable ſervice unto God, than thoſe words of devotion which we offer to him either in the *Church*, or in our *cloſet*.

Every ſober reader will eaſily perceive, that I don't intend to leſſen the true and great value of Prayers, either publick or private; but only to ſhew him, that they are certainly but a very ſlender part of devotion, when compared to a devout life.

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To see this in a yet clearer light, let us suppose a person to have appointed times for praising God with Psalms and Hymns, and to be strict in the observation of them; let it be supposed also, that in his common life he is restless and uneasy, full of murmurings and complaints at every thing, never pleased but by chance, as his temper happens to carry him, but murmuring and repining at the very seasons, and having something to dislike in every thing that happens to him. Now can you conceive any thing more absurd and unreasonable, than such a character as this? Is such a one to be reckon'd *thankful* to God, because he has *forms of praise* which he offers to him? Nay, is it not certain, that such forms of praise must be so far from being an acceptable devotion to God, that they must be abhorr'd as an abomination? Now the absurdity which you see in this instance, is the same in any other part of our life; if our *common life* hath any contrariety to our prayers, it is the same abomination, as songs of thanksgiving in the mouths of murmurers.

Bended knees, whilst you are cloathed with pride; heavenly petitions, whilst you are hoarding up treasures upon earth; holy devotions, whilst you live in the follies of the world; prayers of meekness and charity, whilst your heart is the seat of spight and resentment; hours of prayer, whilst you give up days and years to idle diversions, impertinent visits, and foolish pleasures; are as absurd, un-

acceptable ſervice to God, as forms of thankſgiving from a perſon that lives in repinings and diſcontent.

So that unleſs the common courſe of our lives be according to the common ſpirit of our prayers, our prayers are ſo far from being a real or ſufficient degree of devotion, that they become an empty lip-labour, or, what is worſe, a notorious hypocriſy.

Seeing therefore we are to make the *ſpirit* and *temper* of our prayers the *common ſpirit and temper* of our lives, this may ſerve to convince us, that *all orders* of people are to labour and aſpire after the *ſame utmoſt* perfection of the Chriſtian life. For as all Chriſtians are to uſe the ſame holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the ſame earneſtneſs to pray for the Spirit of God; ſo is it a ſufficient proof, that all orders of people are, to the utmoſt of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one ſpirit, for which they are all to pray.

As certain therefore as the ſame holineſs of prayers requires the ſame holineſs of life, ſo certain is it, that all Chriſtians are called to the ſame holineſs of life.

A *ſoldier*, or a *tradeſman* is not called to miniſter at the *altar*, or preach the Goſpel; but every ſoldier or tradeſman is as much obliged to be devout, humble, holy, and heavenly-minded in all the parts of his *common life*, as a *clergyman* is obliged to be zealous, faith-

faithful, and laborious in all parts of his profeſſion.

And all this for this one plain reaſon, becauſe all people are to pray for the ſame holineſs, wiſdom, and divine tempers, and to make themſelves as fit as they can for the ſame heaven.

All men therefore, as men have one and the ſame *important* buſineſs, to act up to the excellency of their rational nature, and to make *reaſon* and *order* the law of all their deſigns and actions. All Chriſtians, as Chriſtians, have one and the ſame calling, to live according to the excellency of the Chriſtian ſpirit, and to make the ſublime precepts of the Goſpel, the rule and meaſure of all their tempers in common life. The one thing needful to one, is the one thing needful to all.

The *merchant* is no longer to hoard up treaſures upon earth; the *ſoldier* is no longer to fight for glory; the great *ſcholar* is no longer to pride himſelf in the depths of ſcience; but they muſt all with one ſpirit *count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus.*

The *fine lady* muſt teach her eyes to weep, and be cloathed with humility. The *polite gentleman* muſt exchange the gay thoughts of wit and fancy, for a *broken and a contrite heart.* The man of *quality* muſt ſo far renounce the dignity of his birth, as to think himſelf miſerable till he is *born again.* *Ser-*

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vants muſt conſider their ſervice as done unto God. *Maſters* muſt conſider their ſervants as their brethren in Chriſt, that are to be treated as their fellow members of the myſtical body of Chriſt.

Young Ladies muſt either devote themſelves to piety, prayer, ſelf-denial, and all good works, in a *virgin ſtate* of life; or elſe marry to be holy, ſober, and prudent in the care of a family, bringing up their children in piety, humility, and devotion, and abounding in all other good works, to the utmoſt of their ſtate and capacity. They have no choice of any thing elſe, but muſt devote themſelves to God in one of theſe ſtates. They may chuſe a marry'd, or a ſingle life; but it is not left to their choice, whether they will make either ſtate, a ſtate of holineſs, humility, devotion, and all other duties of the Chriſtian life. It is no more left in their power, becauſe they have fortunes, or are born of rich parents, to divide themſelves betwixt God and the world, or take ſuch pleaſures as their fortune will afford them, than it is allowable for them to be ſometimes chaſte and modeſt, and ſometimes not.

They are not to conſider, how much religion may ſecure them a *fair character*, or how they may add devotion to an *impertinent*, *vain*, and *giddy* life; but muſt look into the *ſpirit* and *temper* of their prayers, into the *nature* and *end* of Chriſtianity, and then they will find, that whether marry'd or unmarry'd, they have

have but one buſineſs upon their hands, to be wiſe, and pious, and holy, not in little modes and forms of worſhip, but in the whole turn of their minds, in the whole form of all their behaviour, and in the daily courſe of their common life.

Young Gentlemen muſt conſider, what our bleſſed Saviour ſaid to the young Gentleman in the Goſpel, he bid *him ſell all that he had and give to the poor*. Now tho' this text ſhould not oblige *all* people to ſell *all*; yet it certainly obliges all kinds of people to *employ all* their eſtates in ſuch wiſe and reaſonable and charitable ways, as may ſufficiently ſhew that all that they have is devoted to God, and that no part of it is kept from the poor, to be ſpent in needleſs, vain, and fooliſh expences.

If therefore *young Gentlemen* propoſe to themſelves a life of pleaſure and indulgence, if they ſpend their eſtates in high living, in luxury and intemperance, in ſtate and equipage, in pleaſures and diverſions, in ſports and gaming, and ſuch like wanton gratifications of their fooliſh paſſions, they have as much reaſon to look upon themſelves to be *Angels*, as to be diſciples of Chriſt.

Let them be aſſur'd, that it is the one only buſineſs of a *Chriſtian Gentleman*, to diſtinguiſh himſelf by good works, to be eminent in the moſt ſublime virtues of the Goſpel, to bear with the ignorance and weakneſs of the vulgar, to be a friend and patron to all that dwell about

about him, to live in the utmoſt heights of wiſdom and holineſs, and ſhew thro' the whole courſe of his life a true religious greatneſs of mind. They muſt aſpire after ſuch a gentility, as they might have learnt from ſeeing the bleſſed Jeſus, and ſhew no other ſpirit of a gentleman, but ſuch as they might have got by living with the holy Apoſtles. They muſt learn to love God with all their heart, with all their ſoul, and with all their ſtrength, and their neighbour as themſelves; and then they have all the greatneſs and diſtinction that they can have here, and are fit for an eternal happineſs in heaven hereafter.

Thus in all orders and conditions, either of men or women, this is the one common holineſs which is to be the *common life* of all Chriſtians.

The *Merchant* is not to leave devotion to the Clergyman, nor the *Clergyman* to leave humility to the *labourer*; women of *fortune* are not to leave it to the poor of their ſex, *to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, to adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, ſhamefacedneſs* and *ſobriety*; nor *poor women* leave it to the rich to attend at the worſhip and ſervice of God. *Great men* muſt be eminent for true *poverty of ſpirit*, and people of a *low and afflicted* ſtate muſt greatly rejoyce in God.

The man of *ſtrength* and *power* is to forgive and pray for his enemies, and the *innocent ſufferer* that is chain'd in priſon, muſt with *Paul* and *Silas*, at midnight ſing praiſes to God. For God is to be glorified, holineſs

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is to be practiſed, and the ſpirit of Religion is to be the common ſpirit of every Chriſtian in every ſtate and condition of life.

For the Son of God did not come from above, to add an external form of worſhip to the ſeveral ways of life that are in the world; and ſo to leave people to live as they did before, in ſuch tempers and enjoyments as the faſhion and ſpirit of the world approves. But as he came down from heaven, altogether divine and heavenly in his own nature, ſo it was to call mankind to a divine and heavenly life; to the higheſt change of their whole nature and temper; to be born again of the holy Spirit; to walk in the wiſdom and light and love of God; and be like him to the utmoſt of their power; to renounce all the moſt plauſible ways of the world, whether of greatneſs, buſineſs, or pleaſure; to a mortification of all their moſt agreeable paſſions; and to live in ſuch wiſdom, and purity and holineſs, as might fit them to be glorious in the enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Whatever therefore is *fooliſh*, *ridiculous*, *vain*, or *earthly*, or *ſenſual* in the life of a Chriſtian, is ſomething that ought not to be there; it is a *ſpot* and a *defilement* that muſt be *waſhed* away with tears of repentance. But if any thing of this kind runs thro' the *courſe* of our whole life, if we allow ourſelves in things that are either vain, fooliſh, or ſenſual, we renounce our profeſſion.

For

For as ſure as Jeſus Chriſt was wiſdom and holineſs, as ſure as he came to make us like himſelf, and to be baptiz'd into his ſpirit, ſo ſure is it, that none can be ſaid to keep to their Chriſtian profeſſion, but they who to the utmoſt of their power, live a wiſe and holy and heavenly life. This and this alone is Chriſtianity, an univerſal holineſs in every part of life, a heavenly wiſdom in all our actions, not conforming to the ſpirit and temper of the world, but turning all wordly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God.

But now, if this devout ſtate of heart, if theſe habits of inward holineſs be true Religion, then true Religion is equally the duty and happineſs of all orders of men; for there is nothing to recommend it to one, that is not the ſame recommendation of it to all ſtates of people.

If it be the happineſs and glory of a *Biſhop* to live in this devout ſpirit, full of theſe holy tempers, doing every thing as unto God, it is as much the glory and happineſs of all men and women, whether young or old, to live in the ſame ſpirit. And whoever can find any reaſons, why an *antient Biſhop* ſhould be intent upon divine things, turning all his life into the higheſt exerciſes of piety, wiſdom, and devotion, will find them ſo many reaſons, why he ſhould to the utmoſt of his power, do the ſame himſelf.

If you ſay that a *Biſhop* muſt be an eminent example of Chriſtian holineſs, becauſe of his high

high and ſacred calling, you ſay right. But if you ſay, that it is more to his advantage to be exemplary, than it is yours, you greatly miſtake. For there is nothing to make the higheſt degrees of holineſs deſirable to a Biſhop, but what makes them equally deſirable to every *young perſon* of every family.

For an exalted piety, high devotion, and the religious uſe of every thing, is as much the glory and happineſs of one ſtate of life, as it is of another.

Do but fancy in your mind what a ſpirit of piety you would have in the *beſt Biſhop* in the world, how you would have him *love* God, how you would have him *imitate* the life of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, how you would have him live *above* the world, *ſhining* in all the inſtances of a *heavenly life*, and then you have found out that ſpirit, which you ought to make the ſpirit of your own life.

I deſire every reader to dwell a while upon this reflection, and perhaps he will find more conviction from it, than he imagines. Every one can tell how good and pious he would have ſome people to be; every one knows, how wiſe and reaſonable a thing it is in a *Biſhop*, to be entirely above the world, and be an eminent example of Chriſtian perfection: As ſoon as you think of a *wiſe and ancient Biſhop*, you fancy ſome exalted degree of piety, a living example of all thoſe holy tempers, which you find deſcrib'd in the Goſpel.

Now

Now if you aſk your ſelf, what is the happieſt thing for a *young Clergyman* to do? You muſt be forc'd to anſwer, that nothing can be ſo happy and glorious for him, as to be like that excellent holy Biſhop.

If you go on and aſk what is the happieſt thing, for any *young Gentleman* or his *ſiſters* to do? The anſwer muſt be the ſame; that nothing can be ſo happy or glorious for them as to live in ſuch habits of piety, in ſuch exerciſes of a divine life, as this good old Biſhop does. For every thing that is great and glorious in Religion, is as much the true glory of every man or woman, as it is the glory of any Biſhop. If high degrees of divine love, if fervent charity, if ſpotleſs purity, if heavenly affection, if conſtant mortification, if frequent devotion be the beſt and happieſt way of life for any Chriſtian; it is ſo for every Chriſtian.

Conſider again; if you was to ſee a Biſhop in the whole courſe of his life, living below his characters, conforming to all the fooliſh tempers of the world, and govern'd by the ſame cares and fears which govern vain and worldly men, what would you think of him? Would you think that he was only guilty of a *ſmall miſtake?* No, You would condemn him, as erring in that which is not only the *moſt*, but the *only important* matter that relates to him. Stay a while in this conſideration, till your mind is fully convinc'd, how miſe-

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rable a miſtake it is in a Biſhop, to live a careleſs wordly life.

Whilſt you are thinking in this manner, turn your thoughts towards ſome of your acquaintance, your brother or ſiſter, or any young perſon. Now if you ſee the common courſe of their lives to be not according to the doctrines of the Goſpel, if you ſee that their way of life cannot be ſaid to be a ſincere endeavour to enter in at the ſtrait gate, you ſee ſomething that you are to condemn in the ſame degree, and for the ſame reaſons. They don't commit a *ſmall miſtake*, but are wrong in that which is *their all*, and miſtake their true happineſs, as much as that *Biſhop* does, who neglects the high duties of his calling. Apply this reaſoning to your ſelf; if you find your ſelf living an idle, indulgent, vain life, chuſing rather to gratify your paſſions, than to live up to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and practiſe the plain precepts of our bleſſed Lord, you have all that blindneſs and unreaſonableneſs to charge upon your ſelf that you can charge upon any irregular Biſhop.

For all the virtues of the Chriſtian life, its perfect purity, its heavenly tempers, are as much the ſole rule of your life, as the ſole rule of the life of a Biſhop. If you neglect theſe holy tempers, if you don't eagerly aſpire after them, if you do not ſhew your ſelf a viſible example of them, you are as

much fallen from your true happiness, you are as great an *enemy* to your self, and have made as *bad a choice*, as that Bishop that chuses rather to enrich his family, than to be like an *Apostle*. For there is no reason, why you should think the highest holiness, the most heavenly tempers, to be the duty and happiness of a *Bishop*; but what is as good a reason, why you should think the same tempers, to be the duty and happiness of all Christians. And as the wisest *Bishop* in the world, is he, who lives in the greatest heights of holiness, who is most exemplary in all the exercises of a divine life, so the *wisest youth*, the wisest *woman*, whether marry'd or unmarry'd, is she, that lives in the highest degrees of Christian holiness, and all the exercises of a divine and heavenly life.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Shewing how great devotion fills our lives with the greateſt peace and happineſs, that can be enjoy'd in this world.

SOME people will perhaps object, that all theſe rules of holy living unto God in all that we do, are too great a *reſtraint* upon human life; that it will be made too *anxious* a ſtate, by thus introducing a regard to God in all our actions. And that by depriving our ſelves of ſo many ſeemingly innocent pleaſures, we ſhall render our lives *dull*, *uneaſy*, and *melancholy*.

To which it may be anſwer'd:

Firſt, That theſe rules are preſcrib'd for, and will certainly procure a quite contrary end. That inſtead of making our lives dull and melancholy, they will render them full of content and ſtrong ſatisfactions. That by theſe rules we only change the childiſh ſatisfactions of our *vain* and *ſickly* paſſions, for the ſolid enjoyments, and real happineſs of a *ſound mind*.

Secondly, That as there is no foundation for comfort in the enjoyments of this life, but in the aſſurance that a wiſe and good God go-

verneth the world, ſo the more we find out God in every thing, the more we apply to him in every place, the more we look up to him in all our actions, the more we conform to his will, the more we act according to his wiſdom, and imitate his goodneſs, by ſo much the more do we enjoy God, partake of the divine nature, and heighten and increaſe all that is *happy* and *comfortable* in human life.

Thirdly, He that is endeavouring to ſubdue and root out of his mind all thoſe paſſions of *pride*, *envy*, and *ambition*, which religion oppoſes, is doing more to make himſelf happy, even in this life, than he that is contriving means to indulge them.

For theſe paſſions are the cauſes of all the diſquiets and vexations of human life: They are the *dropſies* and *fevers* of our minds, vexing them with falſe appetites, and reſtleſs cravings after ſuch things as we do not want, and ſpoiling our taſte for thoſe things which are our proper good.

Do but imagine that you ſome where or other ſaw a man, that propos'd *reaſon* as the rule of all his actions, that had no deſires but after ſuch things as *nature* wants, and *religion* approves, that was as pure from all the motions of *pride*, *envy*, and *covetouſneſs*, as from thoughts of *murder*; that in this freedom from worldly paſſions, he had a ſoul full of

divine

divine love, wiſhing and praying that all men may have what they want of worldly things, and be partakers of eternal glory in the life to come.

Do but fancy a man living in this manner, and your own conſcience will immediately tell you, that he is the happieſt man in the world, and that it is not in the power of the richeſt fancy to invent any higher happineſs in the preſent ſtate of life.

And on the other hand, if you ſuppoſe him to be in any degree *leſs perfect*; if you ſuppoſe him but ſubject to one fooliſh fondneſs, or vain paſſion, your own conſcience will again tell you, that he ſo far leſſens his own happineſs, and robs himſelf of the true enjoyment of his other virtues. So true is it, that the *more* we live by the rules of religion, the more peaceful and happy do we render our lives.

Again, as it thus appears, that real happineſs is only to be had from the *greateſt degrees* of piety, the *greateſt denials* of our paſſions, and the *ſtricteſt rules* of religion, ſo the ſame truth will appear from a conſideration of *human miſery*. If we look into the world, and view the diſquiets and troubles of human life, we ſhall find that they are all owing to our violent and irreligious paſſions.

Now all trouble and uneaſineſs is founded in the *want* of ſomething or other; would we therefore know the true cauſe of our troubles and diſquiets, we muſt find out the cauſe

of our wants; becauſe that which creates and increaſeth our wants, does in the ſame degree create and increaſe our trouble and diſquiets.

God almighty has ſent us into the world with very few wants; *meat*, and *drink*, and *cloathing*, are the only things neceſſary in life; and as theſe are only our preſent needs, ſo the preſent world is well furniſh'd to ſupply theſe needs.

If a man had half the world in his power, he can make no more of it than this; as he wants it only to ſupport an *animal* life, ſo is it unable to do any thing elſe for him, or to afford him any other happineſs.

This is the ſtate of man, born with few wants, and into a large world, very capable of ſupplying them. So that one would reaſonably ſuppoſe, that men ſhould paſs their lives in content and thankfulneſs to God, at leaſt that they ſhould be free from violent diſquiets and vexations, as being placed in a world, that has more than enough to relieve all their wants.

But if to all this we add, that this ſhort life, thus furniſh'd with all that we want in it, is only a ſhort paſſage to eternal glory, where we ſhall be cloathed with the brightneſs of *angels*, and enter into the joys of God, we might ſtill more reaſonably expect, that human life ſhould be a ſtate of peace, and joy, and delight in God. Thus it would certainly

tainly be, if reaſon had its full power over us.

But alas, though God, and Nature, and Reaſon, make human life thus free from wants, and ſo full of happineſs, yet our paſſions, in rebellion againſt God, againſt *nature* and *reaſon*, create a new world of evils, and fill human life with imaginary wants, and vain diſquiets.

The man of *pride* has a thouſand wants, which only his own pride has *created*; and theſe render him as full of trouble, as if God had created him with a *thouſand appetites*, without creating any thing that was proper to ſatisfy them. *Envy* and *Ambition* have alſo their endleſs wants, which diſquiet the ſouls of men, and by their contradictory motions, render them as fooliſhly miſerable, as thoſe that want to *fly* and *creep* at the ſame time.

Let but any complaining, diſquieted man tell you the ground of his uneaſineſs, and you will plainly ſee, that he is the author of his own torment; that he is vexing himſelf at ſome imaginary evil, which will ceaſe to torment him, as ſoon as he is content to be that which God, and nature, and reaſon require him to be.

If you ſhould ſee a man paſſing his days in diſquiet, becauſe he could not *walk* upon the *water*, or *catch birds* as they fly by him, you would readily confeſs, that ſuch a one might thank himſelf for ſuch uneaſineſs. But now if you look into all the moſt tor-

menting diſquiets of life, you will find them all thus abſurd; where people are only tormented by their own folly, and vexing themſelves at ſuch things as no more concern them, nor are any more their proper good, than *walking* upon the *water*, or *catching birds*.

What can you conceive more ſilly and extravagant, than to ſuppoſe a man racking his brains, and ſtudying night and day how to *fly*? *wandring* from his own houſe and home, wearying himſelf with *climbing* upon every aſcent, *cringing* and *courting* every body he meets, to lift him up from the ground, bruiſing himſelf with *continual falls*, and at laſt breaking his neck? And all this, from an imagination that it would be *glorious* to have the eyes of people gazing up at him, and mighty happy to *eat*, and *drink*, and *ſleep*, at the top of the higheſt trees in the kingdom. Would you not readily own, that ſuch a one was only diſquieted by his *own folly*.

If you aſk what it ſignifies to ſuppoſe ſuch ſilly creatures as theſe, as are no where to be found in human life?

It may be anſwer'd, that where-ever you ſee an *ambitious* man, there you ſee this *vain and ſenſeleſs flyer*.

Again, if you ſhould ſee a man that had a large *pond* of *water*, yet living in *continual thirſt*, not ſuffering himſelf to drink *half a draught*, for fear of leſſening his pond; if you ſhould ſee him waſting his time and ſtrength, in *fetching more* water to his pond, always

thirſty

thirſty, yet always carrying a *bucket* of water in his hand, watching early and late to catch the *drops* of rain, gaping after every cloud, and running greedily into every *mire* and *mud*, in hopes of water, and always ſtudying how to make every *ditch* empty it ſelf into his *pond*. If you ſhould ſee him grow *grey* and *old* in theſe anxious labours, and at laſt end a *careful*, *thirſty* life, by falling into his own *pond*, would you not ſay that ſuch a one was not only the author of all his own diſquiets, but was fooliſh enough to be reckon'd amongſt *ideots* and *madmen?* But yet fooliſh and abſurd as this character is, it does not repreſent half the follies, and abſurd diſquiets of the *covetous man*.

I could now eaſily proceed to ſhew the ſame effects of all our other paſſions; and make it plainly appear, that all our miſeries, vexations, and complaints, are entirely of our own making, and that in the ſame abſurd manner, as in theſe inſtances of the *covetous* and ambitious man. Look where you will, you will ſee all *worldly vexations* but like the vexation of him, that was always in *mire* and *mud* in ſearch of water to drink, when he had more at home than was ſufficient for an *hundred horſes*.

Cælia is always telling you how *provok'd* ſhe is, what *intolerable ſhocking* things happen to her, what *monſtrous* uſage ſhe ſuffers, and what *vexations* ſhe meets with every-where. She tells you that her patience is quite wore out,

out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every *aſſembly* that ſhe is at, ſends her home provok'd; ſomething or other has been ſaid, or done, that no *reaſonable*, well-bred perſon ought to bear. *Poor people* that want her charity, are ſent away with haſty anſwers, not becauſe ſhe has not a heart to part with any money, but becauſe ſhe is *too full* of ſome trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Cælia* has no buſineſs upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune; but yet by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think, that ſhe had neither *food* nor *lodging*. If you ſee her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when ſhe ſpeaks to you, it is becauſe ſhe is juſt come from a *viſit*, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talk'd all the time to *Lucinda*, who has not half her fortune. When croſs accidents have ſo diſorder'd her ſpirits, that ſhe is forc'd to ſend for the *Doctor* to make her able to eat; ſhe tells him, in great anger at Providence, that ſhe never was well ſince ſhe was born, and that ſhe envies every beggar that ſhe ſees in health.

This is the diſquiet life of *Cælia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own *ſpirit*.

If you could inſpire her with *chriſtian humility*, you need do no more to make her as happy as any perſon in the world. This virtue would make her thankful to God for half ſo much health as ſhe has had, and help her

to

to enjoy more for the time to come. This virtue would keep off *tremblings* of the ſpirits, and *loſs* of appetite, and her blood would need nothing elſe to ſweeten it.

I have juſt touched upon theſe abſurd characters for no other end, but to convince you in the plaineſt manner, that the *ſtricteſt rules* of religion are ſo far from rendring a life *dull*, *anxious*, and *uncomfortable*, (as is above objected) that, on the contrary, all the miſeries, vexations, and complaints that are in the world, are all owing to the *want* of religion; being directly cauſed by thoſe abſurd paſſions, which religion teaches us to deny.

For all the *wants* which diſturb human life, which make us uneaſy to ourſelves, quarrelſome with others, and unthankful to God; which weary us in vain labours and fooliſh anxieties; which carry us from project to project, from place to place, in a poor purſuit of we don't know what, are the *wants* which neither God, nor nature, nor reaſon hath ſubjected us to, but are ſolely infuſed into us by pride, envy, ambition, and covetouſneſs.

So far therefore as you reduce your deſires to ſuch things as *nature* and *reaſon* require; ſo far as you regulate all the motions of your heart by the *ſtrict rules* of religion, ſo far you remove yourſelf from that infinity of *wants* and vexations, which torment every heart that is left to itſelf.

Moſt people indeed confeſs, that religion preſerves us from a great many evils, and helps

helps us in many reſpects to a more happy enjoyment of ourſelves; but then they imagine, that this is only true of ſuch a *moderate ſhare* of religion, as only gently reſtrains us from the exceſſes of our paſſions. They ſuppoſe that the *ſtrict rules* and reſtraints of an *exalted* piety, are ſuch *contradictions* to our nature, as muſt needs make our lives *dull* and *uncomfortable*.

Altho' the weakneſs of this objection ſufficiently appears from what hath been already ſaid, yet I ſhall add one word more to it.

This objection ſuppoſes, that religion *moderately* practis'd, adds *much* to the happineſs of life; but that ſuch heights of piety as the perfection of religion requireth, have a contrary effect.

It ſuppoſes therefore, that it is happy to be kept from the *exceſſes* of envy, but unhappy to be kept from *other* degrees of *envy*. That it is happy to be deliver'd from a *boundleſs* ambition, but unhappy to be without a more *moderate* ambition. It ſuppoſes alſo, that the happineſs of life conſiſts in a *mixture* of virtue and vice, a mixture of ambition and humility, charity and envy, heavenly affection and covetouſneſs. All which is as abſurd, as to ſuppoſe that it is happy to be free from exceſſive pains, but unhappy to be without more moderate pains; or that the happineſs of *health* conſiſted in being partly ſick, and partly well.

For if humility be the peace and reſt of the ſoul, then no one has ſo much happineſs from humi-

humility, as he that is the moſt humble. If exceſſive envy is a torment of the ſoul, he moſt perfectly delivers himſelf from torment, that moſt perfectly extinguiſhes every ſpark of envy. If there is any peace and joy in doing any action according to the will of God, he that brings the moſt of his actions to this rule, does moſt of all increaſe the peace and joy of his life.

And thus it is in every virtue; if you act up to every degree of it, the more happineſs you have from it. And ſo of every vice; if you only abate its exceſſes, you do but little for yourſelf; but if you reject it in all degrees, then you feel the true eaſe and joy of a *reformed* mind.

As for example: If religion only reſtrains the *exceſſes* of revenge, but lets the ſpirit ſtill live within you in leſſer inſtances, your religion may have made your life a little more outwardly decent, but not made you at all happier or eaſier in yourſelf. But if you have once ſacrific'd all thoughts of revenge, in obedience to God, and are reſolv'd to return good for evil at all times, that you may render your ſelf more like to God, and fitter for his mercy in the kingdom of love and glory; this is a height of virtue that will make you feel its happineſs.

Secondly, As to thoſe ſatisfactions and enjoyments which an exalted piety requireth us to deny ourſelves, this deprives us of no real comfort of life. For,

For, *1st*, Piety requires us to renounce no ways of life, where we can act *reasonably*, and offer what we do to the glory of God. All ways of life, all satisfactions and enjoyments that are within these bounds, are no way deny'd us by the strictest rules of piety. Whatever you can do, or enjoy, as in the presence of God, as his servant, as his rational creature, that has received reason and knowledge from him; all that you can perform conformably to a rational nature, and the will of God, all this is allowed by the laws of piety? And will you think that your life will be uncomfortable, unless you may displease God, be a fool and mad, and act contrary to that reason and wisdom which he has implanted in you?

And as for those satisfactions, which we dare not offer to a holy God, which are only invented by the folly and corruption of the world, which inflame our passions, and sink our souls into grossness and sensuality, and render us incapable of the divine favour either here or hereafter; surely it can be no uncomfortable state of life, to be rescu'd by religion from such self-murder, and to be render'd capable of eternal happiness.

Let us suppose a *person* destitute of that knowledge which we have from our senses, placed somewhere alone by himself, in the midst of a variety of things which he did not know how to use: that he has by him *bread, wine, water, golden dust, iron chains, gravel, garments, fire*, &c. Let it be supposed, that he

he has no knowledge of the *right uſe* of theſe things, nor any direction from his *ſenſes* how to quench his *thirſt*, or ſatisfy his *hunger*, or make *any uſe* of the things about him. Let it be ſuppoſed, that in his drought he puts *golden duſt* into his eyes; when his *eyes* ſmart, he puts *wine* into his *ears*; that in his hunger, he puts *gravel* in his mouth; that in pain, he loads himſelf with the *iron chains*, that feeling cold, he puts his feet in the water; that being frighted at the fire, he runs away from it; that being weary, he makes a *ſeat* of his *bread*. Let it be ſuppoſed, that thro' his ignorance of the right uſe of the things that are about him, he will vainly torment himſelf whilſt he lives; and at laſt dye, *blinded* with *duſt*, *choaked* with *gravel*, and loaded with *irons*. Let it be ſuppos'd, that ſome good Being came to him, and ſhew'd him the nature and uſe of all the things that were about him, and gave him ſuch *ſtrict rules* of uſing them, as would certainly, if obſerv'd, make him the happier for all that he had, and deliver him from the pains, of hunger, and thirſt, and cold.

Now could you with any reaſon affirm, that thoſe ſtrict rules of uſing thoſe things that were about him, had render'd that poor man's life *dull* and *uncomfortable*.

Now this is in ſome meaſure a repreſentation of the *ſtrict rules* of religion; they only relieve our ignorance, ſave us from torment-

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ing ourſelves, and teach us to uſe *every thing* about us to our proper advantage.

Man is placed in a world full of variety of things; his ignorance makes him uſe many of them as abſurdly, as the man that put *duſt* in his *eyes* to relieve his *thirſt*, or put on *chains* to remove pain.

Religion therefore here comes into his relief, and gives him *ſtrict rules* of uſing every thing that is about him; that by ſo uſing them ſuitably to his own nature, and the nature of the things, he may have always the pleaſure of receiving a right benefit from them. It ſhews him what is ſtrictly right in meat, and drink, and cloaths; and that he has nothing elſe to expect from the things of this world, but to ſatisfy ſuch wants of his own; and then to extend his aſſiſtance to all his brethren, that as far as he is able, he may help all his fellow-creatures, to the ſame benefit from the world that he hath.

It tells him, that this world is incapable of giving him any other happineſs, and that all endeavours to be happy in *heaps* of *money*, or *acres* of land, in fine *cloaths*, rich *beds*, ſtately *equipage*, and *ſhew* and *ſplendor*, are only vain endeavours, ignorant attempts after impoſſibilities; theſe things being no more able to give the leaſt degree of happineſs, than *duſt* in the eyes can cure thirſt, or *gravel* in the mouth ſatisfy hunger; but like duſt and gravel miſapply'd, will only ſerve to render him

him more unhappy by such an ignorant misuse of them.

It tells him, that altho' this world can do no more for him, than satisfy these wants of the body; yet that there is a much greater good prepared for man, than eating, drinking, and dressing; that it is yet invisible to his eyes, being too glorious for the apprehension of flesh and blood; but reserved for him to enter upon, as soon as this short life is over; where in a new body, form'd to an angelic likeness, he shall dwell in the light and glory of God to all eternity.

It tells him, that this state of glory will be given to all those, that make a *right use* of the things of this present world; who do not blind themselves with *golden dust*, or eat *gravel*, or groan under loads of *iron* of their own putting on; but use *bread*, *water*, *wine*, and *garments*, for such ends as are according to *nature* and *reason*; and who with faith and thankfulness worship the kind giver of all that they enjoy here, and hope for hereafter.

Now can any one say, that the strictest rules of such a religion as this, debar us of any of the comforts of life? Might it not as justly be said of those rules, that only hindred a man from *choaking* himself with *gravel?* For the strictness of these rules only consists in the exactness of their rectitude.

Who would complain of the severe strictness of a law, that without any exception forbad the putting of dust into our eyes? Who could

think it too rigid, that there were no abatements? Now this is the *strictness* of religion, it requires nothing of us strictly, or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us some hurt.

If religion forbids all instances of *revenge* without any exception, 'tis because all revenge is of the nature of *poison*; and though we don't take so much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all, it corrupts the whole mass of blood, and makes it difficult to be restor'd to our former health.

If religion commands an *universal charity*, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any *reserve*; 'tis because all degrees of love are degrees of happiness, that strengthen and support the divine life of the soul, and are as necessary to its health and happiness, as proper food is necessary to the health and happiness of the body.

If religion has laws against *laying up treasures upon earth*, and commands us to be content with food and raiment; 'tis because every other use of the world is abusing it to our own vexation, and turning all its conveniencies into snares and traps to destroy us. 'Tis because this *plainness* and *simplicity* of life, secures us from the cares and pains of restless pride and envy; and makes it easier to keep that strait road that will carry us to eternal life.

If

If religion ſaith, *Sell that thou haſt, and give to the poor*; 'tis becauſe there is no other natural or reaſonable uſe of our riches, no other way of making ourſelves happier for them; 'tis becauſe it is as *ſtrictly* right to give others that which we do not want ourſelves. as 'tis right to uſe ſo much as our own wants require. For if a man has more food than his own nature requires, how baſe and unreaſonable is it, to invent *fooliſh ways* of waſting it, and make ſport for his own *full belly*, rather than let his fellow-creatures have the ſame comfort from food, which he hath had? It is ſo far therefore from being a hard law of religion, to make this uſe of our riches, that a reaſonable man would rejoice in that religion which teaches him to be happier in that which he gives away, than in that which he keeps for himſelf; which teaches him to make ſpare food and raiment be greater bleſſings to him, than that which feeds and cloaths his own body.

If religion requires us ſometimes to *faſt*, and *deny* our natural appetites, 'tis to leſſen that ſtruggle and war that is in our nature, 'tis to render our bodies fitter inſtruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; 'tis to dry up the ſprings of our paſſions that war againſt the ſoul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that altho' theſe abſtinences give ſome pain to the body, yet they ſo leſſen the power of bodily

appetites and paſſions, and ſo increaſe our taſte of ſpiritual joys, that even theſe ſeverities of religion, when practis'd with diſcretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.

If religion calleth us to a life of *watching* and *prayer*, 'tis becauſe we live amongſt a crowd of enemies, and are always in need of the aſſiſtance of God. If we are to confeſs and bewail our ſins, 'tis becauſe ſuch confeſſions relieve the mind, and reſtore it to eaſe; as *burdens* and *weights* taken off the ſhoulders, relieve the body, and make it eaſier to itſelf. If we are to be frequent and fervent in holy petitions, 'tis to keep us ſteady in the ſight of our true good, and that we may never want the happineſs of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and well-grounded truſt in God. If we are to pray often, 'tis that we may be often happy in ſuch ſecret joys as only prayer can give; in ſuch communications of the divine preſence, as will fill our minds with all the happineſs, that beings not in heaven are capable off.

Was there any thing in the world more worth our care, was there any exerciſe of the mind, or any converſation with men, that turned more to our advantage than this intercourſe with God, we ſhould not be called to ſuch a continuance in prayer. But if a man conſiders what it is that he leaves when he retires to devotion, he will find it no ſmall happineſs to be ſo often relieved from doing *nothing*, or nothing to the purpoſe; from dull idle-

idleneſs, unprofitable labour, or vain converſation. If he conſiders, that all that is in the world, and all that is doing in it, is only for the body, and bodily enjoyments, he will have reaſon to rejoyce at thoſe *hours* of prayer, which carry him to higher conſolations, which raiſe him above theſe poor concerns, which open to his mind a ſcene of greater things, and accuſtom his ſoul to the hope and expectation of them.

If religion commands us to live *wholly* unto God, and to *do all* to his glory, 'tis becauſe every other way, is living *wholly* againſt our ſelves, and will end in our own ſhame and confuſion of face.

As every thing is *dark*, that God does not enlighten; as every thing is *ſenſeleſs*, that has not its ſhare of knowledge from him; as nothing *lives*, but by partaking of life from him; as nothing *exiſts*, but becauſe he commands it to be; ſo there is no *glory*, or *greatneſs*, but what is the glory or greatneſs of God.

We indeed may talk of *human glory*, as we may talk of *human life*, or *human knowledge*; but as we are ſure that human life implies nothing of our *own*, but a dependant living in God, or enjoying ſo much life in God; ſo human glory, whenever we find it, muſt be only ſo much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.

This is the ſtate of all creatures, whether men or angels; as they make not themſelves,

ſo they enjoy nothing from themſelves; if they are great, it muſt be only as great receivers of the gifts of God; their *power* can only be ſo much of the divine power acting in them; their *wiſdom* can be only ſo much of the divine Wiſdom ſhining within them, and their *light* and *glory*, only ſo much of the light and glory of God ſhining upon them.

As they are not *men* or *angels*, becauſe they had a mind to be ſo themſelves, but becauſe the will of God formed them to be what they are; ſo they cannot enjoy this or that happineſs of men or angels, becauſe they have a mind to it, but becauſe it is the will of God, that ſuch things be the happineſs of men, and ſuch things the happineſs of angels. But now if God be thus all in all; if his will is thus the meaſure of all things, and all natures; if nothing can be done, but by his power; if nothing can be ſeen but by a light from him; if we have nothing to fear but from his juſtice; if we have nothing to hope for, but from his goodneſs; if this is the nature of man, thus helpleſs in himſelf; if this is the ſtate of all creatures, as well thoſe in *heaven*, as thoſe on *earth*; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can ſuffer no pain, nor feel any happineſs, but ſo far, and in ſuch degrees, as the power of God does all this: if this be the ſtate of things, then how can we have the leaſt glimpſe of joy or comfort, how can we have any peaceful enjoyment of ourſelves, but by living wholly unto that God, uſing and doing every thing

conform-

conformably to his will? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto him in all our actions, and doing all things suitably to his glory, is so far from being dull, and uncomfortable, that it creates new comforts in every thing that we do.

On the contrary, would you see how *happy* they are who live according to their own wills, who cannot submit to the *dull* and *melancholy* business of a life devoted unto God; look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given one talent?

He could not bear the thoughts of using his talent according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own. *Lord*, says he, *I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo there thou hast that is thine.*

His Lord having convicted him out of his own mouth, dispatches him with this sentence, *Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.* Mat. xxv. 24

Here you see how happy this man made himself by not acting *wholly* according to his Lord's will. It was according to his own account, a happiness of *murmuring* and *discontent*; I knew thee, says he, that thou wast an *hard man:* It was an happiness of *fears* and *apprehensions*; I was, says he, *afraid:* It was

an happineſs of *vain labours* and *fruitleſs travails:* I *went*, ſays he, and *hid thy talent*; and after having been a while the ſport of fooliſh paſſions, tormenting fears, and fruitleſs labours, he is rewarded with darkneſs, eternal weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth.

Now this is the happineſs of all thoſe, who look upon a *ſtrict* and exalted piety, that is, a right uſe of their talent, to be a dull and melancholy ſtate of life.

They may live a while free from the reſtraints and directions of Religion, but inſtead thereof, they muſt be under the abſurd government of their paſſions: They muſt, like the man in the *parable*, live in *murmurings*, and *diſcontents*, in *fears* and *apprehenſions*. They may avoid the labour of doing good, of ſpending their time devoutly, of laying up treaſures in heaven, of cloathing the naked, of viſiting the ſick; but then they muſt, like this man have *labours*, and *pains* in vain, that tend to no uſe or advantage, that do no good either to themſelves, or others; they muſt *travail*, and *labour*, and *work*, and *dig*, to hide their talent in the earth. They muſt like him at their Lord's coming be convicted out of their own mouths, be accus'd by their own hearts, and have every thing that they have ſaid and thought of Religion, be made to ſhew the juſtice of their condemnation to eternal darkneſs, weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

This

This is the purchaſe that they make, who avoid the ſtrictneſs and perfection of Religion, in order to live happily.

On the other hand, would you ſee a ſhort deſcription of the happineſs of a life rightly employ'd, wholly devoted to God, you muſt look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given five talents. *Lord*, ſays he, *thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: behold I have gained beſides them five talents more. His Lord ſaid unto him, well done thou good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make the ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Here you ſee a life that is wholly intent upon the improvement of the talents, that is devoted wholly unto God, is a ſtate of happineſs, proſperous labours, and glorious ſucceſs. Here are not, as in the former caſe, any *uncaſy paſſions*, *murmurings*, *vain fears*, and *fruitleſs labours*. The man is not toiling, and digging in the earth for no end nor advantage; but his pious labours proſper in his hands, his happineſs increaſes upon him; the bleſſing of five becomes the bleſſing of ten talents; and he is receiv'd with a *well done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Now as the caſe of theſe men in the *parable*, left nothing elſe to their choice, but either to be happy in uſing their gifts to the *glory* of the Lord, or miſerable by uſing them according to their *own humours* and *fancies*; ſo the

the ſtate of Chriſtianity leaves us no other choice.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we enjoy, are only ſo many talents from God: if we uſe them to the ends of a pious and holy life, our five talents will become ten, and our labours will carry us into the joy of our Lord; but if we abuſe them to the gratifications of our own paſſions, ſacrificing the gifts of God to our own pride and vanity, we ſhall live here in vain labours and fooliſh anxieties, ſhunning Religion as a melancholy thing, accuſing our Lord as a hard maſter, and then fall into everlaſting miſery.

We may for a while amuſe ourſelves with *names*, and *ſounds*, and *ſhadows* of happineſs; we may talk of this or that greatneſs and dignity; but if we deſire real happineſs, we have no other poſſible way to it, but by improving our talents, by ſo holily and piouſly uſing the *powers* and *faculties* of *men* in this preſent ſtate, that we may be happy and glorious in the *powers* and *faculties* of *angels* in the world to come.

How ignorant therefore are they, of the nature of Religion, of the nature of man, and the nature of God, who think a life of *ſtrict piety* and devotion to God, to be a *dull uncomfortable* ſtate; when it's ſo plain and certain, that there is neither comfort or joy to be found in any thing elſe?

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

The happineſs of a life wholly devoted unto God, farther prov'd, from the vanity, *the* ſenſuality, *and the* ridiculous, poor *enjoyments, which they are forc'd to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This repreſented in various characters.*

WE may ſtill ſee more of the happineſs of a life devoted unto God, by conſidering the poor contrivances for happineſs, and the contemptible ways of life, which they are thrown into, who are not under the directions of a ſtrict piety, but ſeeking after happineſs by other methods.

If one looks, at their lives, who live by no rule but their own humours and fancies; if one ſees but what it is, which they call *joy*, and *greatneſs*, and *happineſs*; if one ſees how they rejoyce, and repent, change and fly from one deluſion to another; one ſhall find great reaſon to rejoyce, that God hath appointed a *ſtrait* and *narrow* way, that leadeth unto life, and that we are not left to the folly of our own minds, or forc'd to take up with ſuch ſhadows of joy and happineſs, as the weakneſs and folly of the world has invented. I ſay *invented*, becauſe thoſe things which make up the *joy and happineſs* of the world, are mere *inventions*, which have no foundation in nature

nature and reaſon, are no way the proper good or happineſs of man, no way perfect either in his body, or his mind, or carry him to his true *end*.

As for inſtance, when a man propoſes to be happy in ways of *ambition*, by raiſing himſelf to ſome *imaginary heights* above other people; this is truly an *invention* of happineſs which has no foundation in nature, but is as mere a cheat, of our own making, as if a man ſhould intend to make himſelf happy by *climbing* up a *ladder*.

If a *woman* ſeeks for happineſs from *fine colours* or *ſpots* upon her face, from *jewels* and *rich cloaths*, this is as merely an *invention* of happineſs, as contrary to *nature* and *reaſon*, as if ſhe ſhould propoſe to make herſelf happy, by painting a *poſt*, and putting the ſame finery upon it. It is in this reſpect that I call theſe joys and happineſs of the world, mere *inventions* of happineſs, becauſe neither God, nor nature, nor reaſon, hath appointed them as ſuch; but whatever appears joyful, or great, or happy in them, is entirely *created* or invented by the blindneſs and vanity of our own minds.

And it is on theſe inventions of happineſs, that I deſire you to caſt your eye, that you may thence learn, how *great a good* Religion is, which delivers you from ſuch a multitude of follies, and vain purſuits, as are the torment and vexation of minds, that wander from their true happineſs in God.

Look

Look at *Flatus*, and learn how miſerable they are, who are left to the folly of their own paſſions.

Flatus is rich and in health, yet always uneaſy, and always ſearching after happineſs. Every time you viſit him, you find ſome new project in his head, he is eager upon it as ſomething that is more worth his while, and will do more for him than any thing that is already paſt. Every new thing ſo ſeizes him, that if you was to take him from it, he would think himſelf quite undone. His ſanguine temper, and ſtrong paſſions, promiſe him ſo much happineſs in every thing, that he is always cheated, and is ſatisfied with nothing.

At his firſt ſetting out in life, *fine cloaths* was his delight, his enquiry was only after the beſt *Taylors* and *Peruke-makers*, and he had no thoughts of excelling in any thing but *dreſs*. He ſpar'd no expence, but carry'd every nicety to its greateſt height. But this happineſs not anſwering his expectations, he left off his *Brocades*, put on a plain coat, rail'd at *fops* and *beaux*, and gave himſelf up to *gaming* with great eagerneſs.

This new pleaſure ſatisfy'd him for ſome time, he envy'd no other way of life. But being by the fate of *play* drawn into a *duel*, where he narrowly eſcap'd his death, he left off the *dice*, and ſought for happineſs no longer amongſt the *gameſters*.

The

The next thing that ſeiz'd his wandring imagination, was the diverſions of the *town:* and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing but *Ladies*, *Drawing-rooms*, *Birth-nights*, *Plays*, *Balls*, and *Aſſemblies*. But growing ſick of theſe, he had recourſe to hard *drinking*. Here he had many a merry night, and met with ſtronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of ſetting up his ſtaff, and looking out no farther; but unluckily falling into a *fever*, he grew angry at all ſtrong liquors, and took his leave of the happineſs of being drunk.

The next attempt after happineſs, carry'd him into the *field*, for two or three years nothing was ſo happy as *hunting*; he enter'd upon it with all his ſoul, and leap'd more *hedges* and *ditches*, than had ever been known in ſo ſhort a time. You never ſaw him but in a *green coat*; he was the envy of all that blow the *horn*, and always ſpoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home in a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertain'd with the ſurprizing accidents of the laſt *noble chaſe*. No ſooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his *dogs*, built new *kennels*, new *ſtables*, and bought a new *hunting ſeat*, but he immediately got ſight of another happineſs, hated the ſenſeleſs noiſe and hurry of hunting, gave away his dogs,

and

and was for ſome time after deep in the *pleaſures* of *building*.

Now he invents new kinds of *dove-cotes*, and has ſuch contrivances in his *barns* and *ſtables*, as were never ſeen before: He wonders at the dulneſs of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of *Architecture*; and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tell his friends, that he never was ſo delighted in any thing in his life; that he has more happineſs amongſt his *brick* and *mortar*, than ever he had at *court*; and that he is contriving how to have ſome little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

The next year he leaves his houſe unfiniſh'd, complains to every body of *Maſons*, and *Carpenters*, and devotes himſelf wholly to the happineſs of *riding about*. After this, you can never ſee him but on *horſe-back*, and ſo highly delighted with this new way of life, that he would tell you, give him but his *horſe* and a *clean country* to ride in, and you might take all the reſt to your ſelf; A variety of new *ſaddles* and *bridles*, and a great change of horſes, added much to the pleaſure of this new way of life. But however, having after ſome time tir'd both himſelf and his horſes, the happieſt thing he could think of next, was to go *abroad* and viſit *foreign Countries*; and there indeed happineſs exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneaſy that he had begun ſo fine a life no ſooner. The next month

month he return'd home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of *foreigners*.

After this he was a great *ſtudent* for one whole year; he was up early and late at his *Italian grammar*, that he might have the happineſs of underſtanding the *opera*, whenever he ſhould hear one, and not be like thoſe *unreaſonable* people, that are pleaſed with they don't know what.

Flatus is very ill-natur'd, or otherwiſe, juſt as his affairs happen to be when you viſit him; if you find him when ſome project is almoſt wore out, you will find a peeviſh ill-bred man; but if you had ſeen him juſt as he enter'd upon his *riding regimen*, or begun to excel in ſounding of the horn, you had been ſaluted with great civility.

Flatus is now at a full ſtand, and is doing what he never did in his life before, he is *reaſoning* and *reflecting* with himſelf. He loſes ſeveral days, in conſidering which of his *caſt-off* ways of life he ſhould try again.

But here a new project comes into his relief. He is now living upon *herbs*, and running about the country to get himſelf into as *good wind* as any *running-footman* in the kingdom.

I have been thus circumſtantial in ſo many fooliſh particulars of this kind of life, becauſe I hope, that every particular folly that you here ſee, will naturally turn itſelf into an argument for the wiſdom and happineſs of a religious life.

If

If I could lay before you a particular account of all the circumſtances of terror and diſtreſs, that daily attend a life at *ſea*, the more particular I was in the account, the more I ſhould make you feel and rejoyce in the happineſs of living upon the *land*.

In like manner, the more I enumerate the *follies*, *anxieties*, *deluſions*, and reſtleſs deſires which go through every part of a life devoted to human paſſions, and worldly enjoyments, the more you muſt be affected with that peace, and reſt, and ſolid content, which religion gives to the ſouls of men.

If you but juſt caſt your eye upon a *madman*, or a *fool*, it perhaps ſignifies little or nothing to you; but if you was to attend them for ſome days, and obſerve the lamentable madneſs and ſtupidity of all their actions, this would be an affecting ſight, and would make you often bleſs your ſelf for the enjoyment of your reaſon and ſenſes.

Juſt ſo, if you are only told in the groſs, of the folly and madneſs of a life devoted to the world, it makes little or no impreſſion upon you; but if you are ſhown how ſuch people live every day; if you ſee the continual folly and madneſs of all their particular actions and deſigns, this would be an affecting ſight, and make you bleſs God, for having given you a greater happineſs to aſpire after.

So that *characters* of this kind, the more folly and ridicule they have in them, pro-

vided that they be but natural, are moſt uſeful to correct our minds; and therefore are no where more proper than in books of devotion, and practical piety. And as in ſeveral caſes, we beſt learn the nature of things, by looking at that which is contrary to them; ſo perhaps we beſt apprehend the *excellency* of wiſdom, by contemplating the *wild extravagancies* of folly.

I ſhall therefore continue this method a little farther, and endeavour to recommend the happineſs of piety to you; by ſhewing you in ſome other inſtances, how miſerably and poorly they live, who live without it.

But you will perhaps, ſay, that the ridiculous, reſtleſs life of *Flatus*, is not the common ſtate of thoſe who reſign themſelves up to live by their own humours, and neglect the ſtrict rules of religion; and that therefore it is not ſo great an argument of the happineſs of a religious life, as I would make it.

I anſwer, that I am afraid it is one of the moſt *general characters* in life; and that few people can read it, without ſeeing ſomething in it that belongs to themſelves. For where ſhall we find that wiſe and happy man, who has not been eagerly purſuing different appearances of happineſs, ſometimes thinking it was here, and ſometimes there?

And if people were to divide their lives into particular ſtages, and aſk themſelves what they were purſuing, or what it was which

which they had chiefly in view, when they were *twenty* years old, what at *twenty-five*, what at *thirty*, what at *forty*, what at *fifty*, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people would find, that they had lik'd, and dislik'd, and pursu'd as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it must necessarily be, more or less, with all those who propose any other happiness, than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But *Secondly*, let it be granted, that the *generality* of people are not of such restless, fickle tempers as *Flatus*; the difference then is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state; they don't leave *gaming*, and then fall to *hunting*. But they have so much *steadiness* in their tempers, that some seek after no other happiness, but that of *heaping* up riches; others grow old in the sports of the *field*; others are content to *drink* themselves to death, without the least enquiry after any other happiness.

Now is there any thing more *happy*, or *reasonable*, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus*? Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a *gatherer* of money, a *hunter*, a *gamester*, or a *drunkard*, all your life?

Shall religion be look'd upon as a burden, as a dull and melancholy ſtate, for calling men from ſuch *happineſs* as this, to live according to the laws of God, to labour after the perfection of their nature, and prepare themſelves for an endleſs ſtate of joy and glory in the preſence of God?

Turn your eyes now another way, and let the *trifling joys*, the *geugaw-happineſs* of *Feliciana*, teach you how wiſe they are, what deluſion they eſcape, whoſe hearts and hopes are fixed upon an happineſs in God.

If you was to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would ſee all the happineſs that ſhe is to have as long as ſhe lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleas'd once, but through a littleneſs of mind, and want of thought.

She is to be again dreſs'd fine, and keep her viſiting day. She is again to change the colour of her *cloaths*, again to have a new *head*, and again put *patches* on her face. She is again to ſee who acts beſt at the *play-houſe*, and who ſings fineſt at the *opera*. She is again to make ten viſits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, eaſily and politely about *nothing*.

She is to be again delighted with ſome new faſhion; and again angry at the change of ſome old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleas'd with hypocritical

critical compliments, and again disturb'd at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleas'd with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare her self for a birth-night; and again see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town; again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings.

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprizing new dress, or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the *substantial* and *regular* parts of *Feliciana*'s happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life, but it was owing to some one, or more, of these things.

It is for this happiness, that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and chearful to consider what is *right* or *wrong* in regard to eternity; or to listen to the sound of such dull words, as *wisdom*, *piety* and *devotion*.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness, that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys, which make Saints and Angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

But now let it here be obſerv'd, that as poor a round of happineſs as this appears, yet moſt women that avoid the reſtraints of religion for a gay life, muſt be content with very ſmall parts of it. As they have not *Feliciana*'s fortune and figure in the world, ſo they muſt give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very ſmall part of her happineſs.

And if you look into the world, and obſerve the lives of thoſe women, whom no arguments can perſuade to live wholly unto God, in a wiſe and pious employment of themſelves, you will find moſt of them to be ſuch, as loſe all the comforts of religion, without gaining the tenth part of *Feliciana*'s happineſs. They are ſuch as ſpend their time and fortunes only in mimicking the pleaſures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy thoſe deluſions, which are only to be purchas'd by conſiderable fortunes.

But if a woman of *high* birth, and *great* fortune, having read the Goſpel, ſhould rather wiſh to be an *under ſervant* in ſome pious family, where wiſdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day; if ſhe ſhould rather wiſh this than to live at the top of *Feliciana*'s happineſs; I ſhould think her neither *mad*, nor *melancholy*; but that ſhe judg'd as rightly of the ſpirit of the Goſpel, as if ſhe had rather wiſh'd to be poor *Lazarus at the gate*, than to be the rich man

cloath'd

cloath'd in purple and fine linnen, and faring ſumptuouſly every day.

But to proceed; would you know what an happineſs it is, to be govern'd by the wiſdom of religion, and be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whoſe greateſt happineſs, is a *good night's* reſt in bed, and a *good meal* when he is up. When he talks of happineſs, it is always in ſuch expreſſions, as ſhews you, that he has only his *bed* and his *dinner* in his thoughts.

This regard to his *meals* and *repoſe*, makes *Succus* order all the reſt of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no buſineſs that may hurry his ſpirits, or break in upon his hours of *eating* and *reſt*. If he reads, it ſhall only be for half an hour, becauſe that is ſufficient to amuſe the ſpirits; and he will read ſomething that may make him laugh, as rendring the body fitter for its *food* and *reſt*. Or if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he always has recourſe to a uſeful treatiſe upon the *ancient cookery*. *Succus* is an enemy to all *party-matters*, having made it an obſervation, that there is as good eating amongſt the *Whigs*, as the *Tories*.

He talks cooly and moderately upon all ſubjects, and is as fearful of falling into a paſſion, as of catching cold; being very poſitive, that they are both equally injurious to the *ſtomach*. If ever you ſee him more hot

than ordinary, it is upon ſome provoking occaſion, when the diſpute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of ſome beloved diſh, which has often made him happy. But he has been ſo long upon theſe ſubjects, is ſo well acquainted with all that can be ſaid on both ſides, and has ſo often anſwer'd all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as ſoon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unleſs he ſhould live to ſee a *Proclamation* againſt eating of *Pheaſant's eggs*.

All the hours that are not devoted either to *repoſe*, or *nouriſhment*, are look'd upon by *Succus* as *waſte* or *ſpare time*. For this reaſon he lodges near a *coffee-houſe* and a *tavern*, that when he riſes in the morning he may be near the *news*, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always ſee him in the ſame place in the *coffee-room*, and if he ſeems more attentively engag'd than ordinary, it is becauſe ſome *criminal* is broke out of *Newgate*, or ſome *Lady* was robb'd laſt night, but they can't tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to ſettle the matter with the Barber's boy, that comes to ſhave him.

The next *waſte-time* that lyes upon his hands, is from dinner to ſupper. And if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head, it

is

is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep, because he has heard, it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forc'd to refuse so welcome a guest.

But here he is soon reliev'd by a settled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper.

After this, *Succus* takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the *English constitution*, and praises that *Minister* the most, who keeps the best table.

On a *Sunday* night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the *town rakes*; and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes, some of them are so abandon'd, as not to have a *regular meal*, or a *sound night's* sleep in a week.

At eleven *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

If you was to live with *Succus* for a twelvemonth, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few *curses* and *oaths* that he uses as occasion offers.

And now I cannot help making this Reflection:

That as I believe the most likely means in the world to inspire a person with true piety,

ty, was to have ſeen the example of ſome eminent profeſſor of Religion; ſo the next thing that is likely to fill one with the ſame zeal, is to ſee the *folly*, the *baſeneſs*, and *poor* ſatisfactions of a life deſtitute of Religion. As the one excites us to love and admire the wiſdom and greatneſs of Religion, ſo the other may make us fearful of living without it.

For who can help bleſſing God for the *means of grace*, and for the *hope of glory*, when he ſees what variety of folly they ſink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours and exerciſes of a pious life, be *ſtedfaſt*, *immoveable*, and *always abounding in the work of the Lord*; when he ſees, what *dull* ſenſuality, what *poor* views, what *groſs* enjoyments they are left to who ſeek for happineſs in other ways.

So that whether we conſider the greatneſs of Religion, or the littleneſs of all other things, and the meanneſs of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things, for a thoughtful mind to reſt upon, but a happineſs in the hopes of Religion.

Conſider now with your ſelf how unreaſonably it is pretended, that a life of *ſtrict* piety, muſt be a *dull* and *anxious* ſtate? For can it with any reaſon be ſaid, that the duties and reſtraints of Religion muſt render our lives heavy and melancholy, when they only deprive

deprive us of such happiness, as has been here laid before you?

Must it be tedious and tiresome to live in the continual exercise of charity, devotion and temperance, to act wisely and virtuously, to do good to the utmost of your power, to imitate the divine perfections, and prepare your self for the enjoyment of God? Must it be dull and tiresome, to be deliver'd from blindness and vanity, from false hopes, and vain fears, to improve in holiness, to feel the comforts of conscience in all your actions, to know that God is your friend, that all must work for your good, that neither life nor death, neither men nor devils can do you any harm; but that all your sufferings and doings, that are offer'd unto God, all your watchings and prayers, and labours of love and charity, all your improvements, are in a short time to be rewarded with everlasting glory in the presence of God; must such a state as this be *dull* and *tiresome*, for want of such happiness, as *Flatus* or *Feliciana* enjoys?

Now if this cannot be said, then there is no happiness or pleasure lost, by being strictly pious, nor has the devout man any thing to envy in any other state of life. For all the art and contrivance in the world, without Religion, cannot make more of human life, or carry its happiness to any greater height, than *Flatus* or *Feliciana have done*.

The finest *wit*, the greatest *genius* upon earth, if not govern'd by Religion, must be as

foolish,

fool ſh, and *low* and *vain* in his methods of happineſs, as the *poor Succus*.

If you was to ſee a man dully endeavouring all his life to ſatisfy his thirſt, by holding up one and the ſame *empty cup* to his mouth, you would certainly deſpiſe his ignorance.

But if you ſhould ſee others of *brighter parts*, and *finer underſtandings*, ridiculing the dull ſatisfaction of *one cup*, and thinking to ſatisfy their own thirſt by a variety of gilt and golden empty cups; would you think that theſe were ever the *wiſer*, or *happier*, or *better* employ'd, for their *finer parts?*

Now this is all the difference that you can ſee in the happineſs of this life.

The *dull* and *heavy* ſoul, may be content with *one empty appearance* of happineſs, and be continually trying to hold *one* and the *ſame empty cup* to his mouth all his life. But then let the *wit*, the *great ſcholar*, the *fine genius*, the great *ſtateſman*, the polite *gentleman*, lay all their heads together, and they can only ſhew you, *more*, and *various*, *empty appearances* of happineſs; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they pleaſe, they can only make a greater variety of *empty cups*.

So that if you don't think it hard to be depriv'd of the pleaſures of *gluttony* for the ſake of Religion, you have no reaſon to think it hard to be reſtrain'd from any other worldly pleaſure. For ſearch as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found,

that

that is *nobler*, or *greater*, than high eating and drinking, unleſs you look for it in the wiſdom and laws of Religion.

And if all that is in the world, are only ſo many *empty cups*, what does it ſignify, which you take, or how many you take, or how many you have?

If you would but uſe yourſelf to ſuch meditations as theſe, to reflect upon the vanity of *all orders* of life without piety, to conſider how all the ways of the world, are only ſo many different ways of error, blindneſs, and miſtake; you would ſoon find your heart made wiſer and better by it. Theſe meditations would awaken your ſoul into a zealous deſire of that ſolid happineſs, which is only to be found in recourſe to God.

Examples of great piety are not now common in the world, it may not be your happineſs to live within ſight of any, or to have your virtue inflam'd by their light and fervour. But the miſery and folly of worldly men, is what meets your eyes in every place, and you need not look far to ſee, how poorly, how vainly men dream away their lives for want of religious wiſdom.

This is the reaſon that I have laid before you ſo many characters of the vanity of a worldly life, to teach you to make a benefit of the corruption of the age, and that you may be made wiſe, tho' not by the ſight of what piety is, yet by ſeeing what miſery and folly reigns, where piety is not.

If

If you would turn your mind to ſuch reflections as theſe, your own obſervation would carry this inſtruction much farther, and all your converſation and acquaintance with the world would be a daily conviction to you, of the neceſſity of ſeeking ſome greater happineſs, than all the poor enjoyments of this world can give.

To meditate upon the perfection of the divine attributes, to contemplate the glories of Heaven, to conſider the joys of Saints and Angels living for ever in the brightneſs and glory of the divine preſence; theſe are the meditations of ſouls advanced in piety, and not ſo ſuited to every capacity.

But to ſee and conſider the *emptineſs* and error of all worldly happineſs; to ſee the *groſſneſs* of ſenſuality, the *poorneſs* of pride, the *ſtupidity* of covetouſneſs, the *vanity* of dreſs, the *deluſion* of honour, the *blindneſs* of our paſſions, the *uncertainty* of our lives, and the *ſhortneſs* of all worldly projects; theſe are meditations that are ſuited to all capacities, fitted to ſtrike all minds; they require no depth of thought, or ſublime ſpeculation, but are forc'd upon us by all our ſenſes, and taught us by almoſt every thing that we ſee and hear.

Prov. viii. 1. This is that *wiſdom that crieth and putteth forth her voice* in the ſtreets, that ſtandeth at all our doors, that appealeth to all our ſenſes, teaching us in every thing and everywhere, by all that we ſee and all that

that we hear, by births and burials, by ſickneſs and health, by life and death, by pains and poverty, by miſery and vanity, and by all the changes and chances of life; that there is nothing elſe for man to look after, no other end in nature for him to drive at, but a happineſs which is only to be found in the hopes and expectations of Religion.

CHAP. XIII.

That not only a life of vanity, *or* ſenſuality, *but even the* moſt regular *kind of life, that is not govern'd by* great *devotion, ſufficiently ſhews its* miſeries, *its* wants, *and* emptineſs *to the eyes of all the world. This repreſented in various characters.*

IT is a very remarkable ſaying of our Lord and Saviour to his diſciples in theſe words: *Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee, and your ears, for they hear.* They teach us two things: *Firſt*, That the *dulneſs* and *heavineſs* of mens minds, with regard to ſpiritual matters, is ſo great, that it may juſtly be compar'd to the want of *eyes* and *ears*.

Secondly, That God has ſo fill'd every *thing* and every *place* with motives and arguments for a godly life, that they who are but ſo bleſs'd,

bleſs'd, ſo happy as to uſe their eyes and their ears, muſt needs be affected with them.

Now though this was in a more eſpecial manner, the caſe of thoſe whoſe ſenſes were witneſſes of the life and miracles and doctrines of our bleſſed Lord, yet is it as truly the caſe of all Chriſtians at this time. For the reaſons of Religion, the calls to piety, are ſo written and engrav'd, upon every thing, and preſent themſelves ſo ſtrongly, and ſo conſtantly to all our ſenſes in every thing that we meet; that they can only be diſregarded by *eyes* that ſee not, and *ears* that hear not.

What greater motive to a religious life, than the *vanity*, the *poorneſs* of all worldly enjoyments? And yet who can help ſeeing and feeling this every day of his life?

What greater *call* to look towards God, than the pains, the ſickneſs, the *croſſes*, and vexations of this life; and yet whoſe eyes and ears are not daily witneſſes of them?

What *miracles* could more ſtrongly appeal to our ſenſes, or what meſſage from heaven ſpeak louder to us, than the *daily dying* and departure of our fellow creatures does?

So that the one thing needful, or the great end of life, is not left to be diſcover'd by fine reaſoning and deep reflections; but is preſs'd upon us in the plaineſt manner, by the experience of all our ſenſes, by every thing that we meet with in life.

Let us but *intend* to *ſee* and *hear*, and then the whole world becomes a book of wiſdom

dom and inſtruction to us; all that is *regular* in the order of nature, all that is *accidental* in the courſe of things, all the miſtakes and diſappointments that happen to our ſelves, all the miſeries and errors that we ſee in other people; become ſo many plain leſſons of advice to us; teaching us with as much aſſurance as an Angel from Heaven, that we can no ways raiſe our ſelves to any true happineſs, but by turning all our thoughts, our wiſhes, and endeavours, after the happineſs of another life.

It is this right uſe of the world, that I would lead you into, by directing you to turn your eyes upon every ſhape of human folly, that you may thence draw freſh arguments and motives of living to the beſt and greateſt purpoſes of your creation.

And if you would but carry this *intention* about you, of profiting by the follies of the world, and of learning the *greatneſs* of Religion, from the *littleneſs* and *vanity* of every other way of life; if I ſay, you would but carry this intention in your mind, you would find, every day, every place, and every perſon, a freſh proof of their wiſdom, who chuſe to live wholly unto God. You would then often return home, the wiſer, the better, and the more ſtrengthen'd in Religion, by every thing that has fallen in your way.

Octavius is a learned, ingenious man, well vers'd in moſt parts of literature, and no ſtranger to any kingdom in *Europe*. The o-

ther day, being juſt recover'd from a lingring *fever*, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends.

My *glaſs*, ſays he, is almoſt run out; and your eyes ſee how many marks of *age* and *death* I bear about me: But I plainly feel my ſelf ſinking away faſter than any ſtanders-by imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much rais'd by ſuch a declaration, expecting to hear ſomething truly excellent from ſo learned a man, who had but a *year* longer to live. When *Octavius* proceeded in this manner: For theſe reaſons, ſays he, my friends, I have left off all *taverns*, the wine of thoſe places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I muſt now be *nice* in what I drink; I can't pretend to do, as I have done; and therefore am reſolved to furniſh my own *cellar* with a little of the very beſt, tho' it coſt me ever ſo much.

I muſt alſo tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be *wiſe* in many other reſpects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices.

You know how much I have lik'd a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four *chearful*, *diverting companions*, is all that I now deſire: becauſe I find, that in my preſent infirmities, if I am left *alone*, or to *grave* company, I am not ſo eaſy to my ſelf.

A few

A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a *nurse*, who clos'd his eyes, before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God.

I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw how *poorly* and *meanly* the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, thro' the want of it.

How often had I envy'd his *great learning*, his skill in *languages*, his knowledge of *antiquity*, his *address*, and fine manner of *expressing* himself upon all subjects! But when I saw how *poorly* it all ended, what was to be the *last year* of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forc'd to talk, for want of being acquainted with the *joys* and *expectations* of piety; I was thorougly convinced, that there was nothing to be envy'd or desir'd, but a *life* of true piety; nor any thing so *poor* and *comfortless*, as a *death* without it.

Now as the young *Eugenius* was thus edify'd and instructed in the present case; so if you are so happy as to have any thing of his *thoughtful* temper, you will meet with variety of instruction of this kind; you will find that arguments for the wisdom and happiness of a

strict piety, offer themselves in all places, and appeal to all your senses in the plainest manner.

You will find, that all the world *preaches* to an *attentive* mind; and that if you have but ears to hear, almost every thing you meet, teaches you some lesson of wisdom.

But now, if to these admonitions and instructions, which we receive from our senses, from an experience of the state of human life; if to these we add the lights of religion, those great truths which the Son of God has taught us; it will be then as much past all doubt, that there is but *one happiness* for man, as that there is but one God.

For since religion teaches us, that our souls are immortal, that piety and devotion will carry them to an eternal enjoyment of God; and that carnal, worldly tempers will sink them into an everlasting misery with damned spirits; what gross nonsense and stupidity is it, to give the name of *joy* or *happiness* to any thing but that, which carries us to this joy and happiness in God?

Was *all* to dye with our *bodies*, there might be some pretence for those *different sorts* of happiness, that are now so much talked of: but since *our all* begins at the death of our bodies; since all men are to be immortal either in misery or happiness, in a world entirely different from this; since they are all hastening hence at all uncertainties, as fast as death can cut them down; some in *sickness*, some in *health*, some *sleeping*, some *waking*, some at *midnight*,

midnight, others at *cock crowing*, and all at hours that they know not of; is it not certain, that no man can exceed another in joy and happineſs, but ſo far as he exceeds him in thoſe virtues, which fit him for a happy death?

Cognatus is a ſober, regular *Clergyman*, of good repute in the world, and well eſteemed in his pariſh. All his pariſhioners ſay he is an *honeſt man*, and very notable at making a *bargain*. The farmers liſten to him with great attention, when he talks of the propereſt time of ſelling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent obſerver of *markets*, and has raiſed a conſiderable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very *orthodox*, and full of *eſteem* for our *Engliſh* Liturgy; and if he has not prayers on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, 'tis becauſe his *Predeceſſor* had not uſed the pariſh to any ſuch cuſtom.

As he cannot ſerve both his *livings* himſelf, ſo he makes it matter of *conſcience* to keep a *ſober curate* upon one of them, whom he *hires* to take care of all the ſouls in the pariſh, at as cheap a rate as a ſober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very proſperous all his time; but ſtill he has had the uneaſineſs and vexations that they have, who are deep in worldly buſineſs, *Taxes*, *loſſes*, *croſſes*, *bad mortgages*, *bad tenants*, and the hardneſs of the times, are frequent ſubjects of his converſation;

ſation; and a good or bad *ſeaſon* has a great effect upon his ſpirits,

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a conſiderable fortune to a *Niece*, whom he has *politely* educated in expenſive finery, by what he has ſav'd out of the tithes of *two livings*.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, becauſe they ſee him (as they call it) in *good circumſtances*; and ſome of them intend to dedicate their own ſons to the Church, becauſe they ſee how well it has ſucceeded with *Cognatus*, whoſe father was but an *ordinary man*.

But now if *Cognatus*, when he firſt enter'd into holy orders, had perceiv'd how abſurd a thing it is to grow *rich* by the goſpel; if he had propoſed to himſelf the example of ſome *primitive father*; if he had had the piety of the great St. *Auſtin* in his eye, who durſt not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the Church; if inſtead of twenty years care to lay up treaſures upon earth, he had diſtributed the income of every year in the moſt Chriſtian acts of charity and compaſſion.

If inſtead of tempting his *Niece* to be proud and providing her with ſuch ornaments, as the *Apoſtle* forbids, he had cloathed, comforted, and aſſiſted numbers of *widows*, *orphans*, and diſtreſs'd, who were all to appear for him at the laſt day.

If inſtead of the cares and anxieties of *bad bonds*, *troubleſome mortgages*, and *ill bargains*, he

he had had the conſtant comfort of knowing, that his treaſure was ſecurely laid up, where neither moth corrupteth, nor thieves break through and ſteal: Could it with any reaſon be ſaid that he had miſtaken the ſpirit and dignity of his order, or leſſen'd any of that happineſs, which is to be found in his ſacred employments?

If inſtead of rejoycing in the happineſs of a ſecond *living*, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman to *traffic* for gain in *holy things*, as to open a *ſhop*.

If he had thought it better to recommend ſome *honeſt labour* to his *Niece*, than to ſupport her in *idleneſs* by the labours of a *curate*; better that ſhe ſhould want *fine cloaths* and a rich huſband, than that *cures of ſouls* ſhould be farm'd about, and brother clergymen not ſuffer'd to *live* by thoſe altars, at which they ſerve. If this had been the ſpirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reaſon be ſaid, that theſe rules of religion, this ſtrictneſs of piety, had robb'd *Cognatus* of any real happineſs? Could it be ſaid, that a life thus govern'd by the ſpirit of the Goſpel, muſt be *dull* and *melancholy*, if compared to that of raiſing a fortune for a *Niece?*

Now as this cannot be ſaid in the preſent caſe, ſo in every other kind of life, if you enter into the particulars of it, you will find, that however eaſy and proſperous it may ſeem, yet you cannot add piety to any part of it,

without adding ſo much of a better joy and happineſs to it.

Look now at that condition of life, which draws the envy of all eyes.

Negotius is a temperate honeſt man. He ſerved his time under a maſter of great trade, but has by his own management made it a more conſiderable buſineſs than ever it was before. For thirty years laſt paſt, he has wrote fifty or ſixty letters in a week, and is buſy in correſponding with all parts of *Europe*. The general good of trade ſeems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whomſoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns either in Church or State, is admired, commended or condemn'd, with ſome regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him, ſo he often lets it go in various kinds of expence and generoſity, and ſometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution: If a *purſe* is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a *plate* for a horſe-race, or to redeem a *priſoner* out of goal, you are always ſure of having ſomething from him.

He has giving a fine *ring of bells* to a Church in the country; and there is much expectation, that he will ſome time or other make a more beautiful *front* to the *market-houſe*, than has yet been ſeen in any place.

For

For it is the generous ſpirit of *Negotius* to do nothing in a mean way.

If you aſk what it is, that has ſecur'd *Negotius* from all *ſcandalous vices*, it is the ſame thing that has kept him from all *ſtrictneſs of devotion*, it is his great buſineſs. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employ'd, to ſuffer him to fall either into any courſes of *rakery*, or to feel the neceſſity of an *inward*, *ſolid* piety.

For this reaſon he hears of the pleaſures of debauchery, and the pleaſures of piety, with the ſame indifferency; and has no more deſire of living in the one than in the other, becauſe neither of them conſiſt with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of buſineſs, which are his happineſs.

If *Negotius* was aſk'd, What it is which he drives at in life? he would be as much at a loſs for an anſwer, as if he was aſk'd, what any other perſon is thinking of. For tho' he always ſeems to himſelf to know what he is doing, and has many things in is head, which are the motives of his actions; yet he cannot tell you of any *one general end* of life, that he has choſen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains.

He has ſeveral confus'd notions in his head, which have been a long time there; ſuch as theſe, *viz*, That it is *ſomething great* to have more buſineſs than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than an hundred of the

the ſame profeſſion; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raiſe an immenſe fortune before he dies. The thing that ſeems to give *Negotius* the greateſt life and ſpirit, and to be moſt in his thoughts, is an expectation that he has, that he ſhall dye richer than any of his buſineſs ever did.

The generality of people, when they think of happineſs, think upon *Negotius*, in whoſe life every inſtance of happineſs is ſuppoſed to meet; ſober, prudent, rich, proſperous, generous, and charitable.

Let us now therefore look at this condition in another, but truer light.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that this ſame *Negotius* was a painful, laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank, nor debauched; but was ſober and regular in his buſineſs. Let it be ſuppoſed, that he grew old in this courſe of trading; and that the *end* and *deſign* of all this labour, and care, and application to buſineſs, was only this, that he might dye poſſeſſed of more than an hundred thouſand pair of *boots* and *ſpurs*, and as many great coats.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that the ſober part of the world ſay of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough maſter of buſineſs, and had acquir'd an hundred thouſand pair of *boots* and *ſpurs* when he dy'd.

Now if this was really the caſe, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of ſuch

buſi-

buſineſs was as poor and ridiculous, as any that can be invented. But it would puzzle any one to ſhew, that a man that has ſpent all his time and thoughts in buſineſs and hurry, that he might dye, as it is ſaid, worth an hundred thouſand pounds, is any whit wiſer than he, who has taken the ſame pains to have as many pair of *boots* and *ſpurs* when he leaves the world.

For if the *temper* and *ſtate* of our ſouls be our *whole ſtate*; if the only end of life be to dye as *free* from ſin, and as *exalted* in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, ſo naked are we to return, and to ſtand a trial before Chriſt, and his holy angels, for everlaſting happineſs or miſery; what can it poſſibly ſignify, what a man had, or had not, in this world? What can it ſignify what you *call* thoſe things which a man has left behind him; whether you call them *his*, or *any one's* elſe; whether you *call* them *trees*, or *fields*, or *birds* and *feathers*; whether you *call* them an hundred *thouſand pounds*, or an hundred thouſand pair of *boots* and *ſpurs*? I ſay, *call* them; for the *things* ſignify no more to him than the *names*.

Now it is eaſy to ſee the folly of a life thus ſpent, to furniſh a man with ſuch a number of *boots* and *ſpurs*. But yet there needs no better faculty of ſeeing, no finer underſtanding, to ſee the folly of a life ſpent in making a man a poſſeſſor of *ten towns* before he dies.

For

For if when he has got all his *towns*, or all his *boots*, his ſoul is to go to its *own place* amongſt ſeparate ſpirits, and his body be laid by in a *coffin*, till the laſt trumpet calls him to judgment; where the enquiry will be, how *humbly*, how *devoutly*, how *purely*, how *meekly* how *piouſly*, how *charitably*, how *heavenly* we have *ſpoke*, *thought*, and *acted*, whilſt we were in the body; how can we ſay, that he who has wore out his life in raiſing an *hundred thouſand pounds*, has acted wiſer for himſelf, than he who has had the ſame *care* to procure an hundred thouſand of *any thing* elſe?

But farther: Let it now be ſuppoſed, that *Negotius*, when he firſt entred into buſineſs, happening to read the Goſpel with *attention*, and eyes open, found that he had a much greater buſineſs upon his hands, than that to which he had ſerved an apprenticeſhip: that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can ſee; ſo glorious, as to deſerve all our thoughts; ſo dangerous, as to need all our care; and ſo certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that from reading this book, he had diſcover'd that his ſoul was more to him than his body; that it was better to grow in the virtues of the ſoul, than to have a large body, or a full purſe; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have variety of fine houſes upon the earth; that it

was

was better to ſecure an everlaſting happineſs, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better to live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and ſelf-denial, than to dye unprepar'd for judgment; better to be moſt like our Saviour, or ſome eminent ſaint, than to excel all the tradeſmen in the world, in buſineſs and bulk of fortune.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that *Negotius* believing theſe things to be true, entirely devoted himſelf to God at his firſt ſetting out in the world, reſolving to purſue his *buſineſs* no farther than was conſiſtent with great devotion, humility, and ſelf-denial; and for no other ends, but to provide himſelf with a ſober ſubſiſtance, and to do all the good that he could, to the ſouls and bodies of his fellow creatures.

Let it therefore be ſuppoſed, that inſtead of the continual hurry of buſineſs, he was frequent in his retirements, and a ſtrict obſerver of all the *hours* of prayer; that inſtead of reſtleſs deſires after more riches, his ſoul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, conſtantly watching againſt worldly tempers, and always aſpiring after divine grace; that inſtead of worldly cares and contrivances, he was buſy in fortifying his ſoul againſt all approaches of ſin; that inſtead of coſtly ſhew, and expenſive generoſity of a ſplendid life, he lov'd and exercis'd all inſtances of humility and lowlineſs; that inſtead of great treats and full tables,

tables, his houſe only furniſh'd a ſober refreſhment to thoſe that wanted it.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy. That his piety made him thankful to God in all croſſes and diſappointments. That his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual diſtribution to all objects of compaſſion.

Now had this been the chriſtian ſpirit of *Negotius* can any one ſay, that he had loſt the true joy and happineſs of life, by thus conforming to the ſpirit, and living up to the hopes of the Goſpel?

Can it be ſaid, that a life made exemplary by ſuch virtues as theſe, which keep heaven always in our ſight, which both delight and exalt the ſoul here, and prepare it for the preſence of God hereafter, muſt be *poor* and *dull*, if compar'd to that of heaping up riches, which can neither ſtay with us, nor we with them?

It would be endleſs to multiply examples of this kind, to ſhew you how little is loſt, and how much is gain'd, by introducing a ſtrict and exact piety into every condition of human life.

I ſhall now therefore leave it to your own meditation, to carry this way of thinking farther, hoping that you are enough directed by what is here ſaid, to convince your ſelf, that a true and exalted piety is ſo far from rendering any life dull and tireſome, that it is the

the only joy and happineſs of every condition in the world.

Imagine to your ſelf ſome perſon in a *conſumption*, or any other *lingering diſtemper*, that was *incurable*.

If you was to ſee ſuch a man wholly intent upon doing every thing in the ſpirit of Religion, making the wiſeſt uſe of all his time, fortune, and abilities. If he was for carrying every duty of piety to its greateſt height, and ſtriving to have all the advantage that could be had from the remainder of his life. If he avoided all buſineſs, but ſuch as was neceſſary; if he was averſe to all the follies and vanities of the world, had no taſte for *finery*, and *ſhew*, but ſought for all his comfort in the hopes and expectations of Religion; you would certainly commend his prudence, you would ſay that he had taken the right method to make himſelf as joyful and happy, as any one can be in a ſtate of ſuch infirmity.

On the other hand, if you ſhould ſee the ſame perſon, with *trembling* hands, *ſhort* breath, *thin* jaws, and *hollow* eyes, wholly intent upon buſineſs and bargains, as long as he could ſpeak. If you ſhould ſee him pleas'd with *fine cloaths*, when he could ſcarce ſtand to be dreſs'd, and laying out his money in *horſes* and *dogs*, rather than purchaſe the prayers of the poor for his ſoul, which was ſo ſoon to be ſeparated from his body, you would certainly condemn him, as a weak ſilly man.

Now

Now as it is eaſy to ſee the reaſonableneſs, the wiſdom and happineſs of a religious ſpirit in a *conſumptive man*, ſo if you purſue the ſame way of thinking, you will as eaſily perceive the ſame wiſdom and happineſs of a pious temper in every other ſtate of life.

For how ſoon will every man that is in *health*, be in the ſtate of him that is in a *conſumption?* How ſoon will he want all the ſame comforts and ſatisfactions of Religion, which every dying man wants?

And if it be wiſe and happy to live piouſly, becauſe we have not above a year to live, is it not being more wiſe, and making ourſelves more happy, becauſe we may have more years to come? If one year of piety before we die, is ſo deſirable, is not more years of piety much more deſirable!

If a man had *five fix'd* years to live, he could not poſſibly think at all, without intending to make the beſt uſe of them *all*. When he ſaw his ſtay ſo ſhort in this world, he muſt needs think that this was not a world for him; and when he ſaw how near he was to another world, that was eternal, he muſt ſurely think it very neceſſary to be very diligent in preparing himſelf for it.

Now as reaſonable as piety appears in ſuch a circumſtance of life, it is yet more reaſonable in every circumſtance of life, to every thinking man.

For,

For who but a madman, can reckon that he has *five* years *certain* to come?

And if it be reaſonable and neceſſary to deny our worldly tempers, and live wholly unto God, becauſe we are *certain* that we are to die at the end of *five years*; ſurely it muſt be much more reaſonable and neceſſary, for us to live in the ſame ſpirit, becauſe we have no *certainty*, that we ſhall live *five weeks*.

Again, if we were to add *twenty* years to the *five*, which is in all probability more than will be added to the lives of many people who are at man's eſtate; what a poor thing is this! how ſmall a difference is there between five, and twenty five years?

It is ſaid, that a *day* is with God as a *thouſand years*, and a thouſand years as one day; becauſe in regard to his eternity, this difference is as nothing.

Now as we are all created to be *eternal*, to live in an endleſs ſucceſſion of ages upon ages, where *thouſands*, and *millions of thouſands* of years, will have no proportion to our everlaſting life in God; ſo with regard to this eternal ſtate, which is our real ſtate, twenty five *years* is as poor a pittance as twenty-five *days*.

Now we can never make any true judgment of time as it relates to us, without conſidering the true ſtate of our *duration*. If we are *temporary* beings, than a little time, may juſtly be call'd a great deal in relation to us,

but if we are *eternal* beings, than the difference of a few years is as nothing.

If we were to ſuppoſe *three* different *ſorts* of rational beings, all of *different*, but *fix'd* duration, one ſort that liv'd *certainly* only a *month*, the other a *year*, and the third an *hundred* years.

Now if theſe beings were to meet together, and talk about time, they muſt talk in a very different language; *half* an *hour* to thoſe that were to live but a *month*, muſt be a very different thing, to what it is to thoſe, who are to live an *hundred years*.

As therefore *time* is thus *different* a thing with regard to the *ſtate* of thoſe who enjoy it, ſo if we would know what time is with regard to our ſelves, we muſt conſider our ſtate.

Now ſince our eternal ſtate, is as certainly ours, as our preſent ſtate; ſince we are as certainly to live for ever, as we now live at all; it is plain, that we cannot judge of the value of any particular time, as to us, but by comparing it to that eternal duration for which we are created.

If you would know, what *five years* ſignify to a being that was to live an *hundred*, you muſt compare *five* to an *hundred*, and ſee what proportion it bears to it, and then you will judge right.

So if you would know, what *twenty* years ſignify to a ſon of *Adam*, you muſt compare it,

it, not to a *million* of ages, but to an *eternal duration*, to which no number of millions bears any proportion; and then you will judge right, by finding it *nothing*.

Consider therefore this; how would you condemn the folly of a man, that should lose his share of future glory, for the sake of being *rich*, or *great*, or *prais'd*, or delighted in *any enjoyment*, only *one poor* day before he was to die!

But if the time will come, when a number of years will seem less to every one, than a day does now; what a condemnation must it then be, if eternal happiness should appear to be lost, for something less than the enjoyment of a day!

Why does a day seem a trifle to us now? It is because we have years to set against it. It is the duration of years, that makes it appear as nothing.

What a *trifle* therefore must the years of a *man's age* appear, when they are forc'd to be set against *eternity*, when there shall be nothing but eternity to compare them with!

Now this will be the case of every man, as soon as he is out of the body; he will be forc'd to forget the distinctions of days and years, and to measure time, not by the course of the Sun, but by setting it against eternity.

As the *fix'd ſtars*, by reaſon of our being plac'd at ſuch diſtance from them, appear but as ſo many *points*; ſo when we, plac'd in eternity, ſhall look back upon *all time*, it will all appear but as a *moment*.

Then, a *luxury*, an *indulgence*, a *proſperity*, a *greatneſs* of *fifty* years, will ſeem to every one that looks back upon it, as the ſame *poor ſhort* enjoyment, as if he had been ſnatch'd away in his *firſt ſin*.

Theſe few reflections upon *time*, are only to ſhew how poorly they think, how miſerably they judge, who are leſs careful of an eternal ſtate, becauſe they *may* be at ſome *years* diſtance from it, than they would be, if they knew they were within a few *weeks of it*.

CHAP. XIV.

Concerning that part of Devotion which relates to times *and* hours *of* Prayer. *Of daily* early *prayer in the morning. How we are to improve our* forms *of Prayer, and how to increaſe the* ſpirit *of devotion.*

HAving in the foregoing Chapters ſhewn the neceſſity of a devout ſpirit, or habit of mind in every part of our common life,

life, in the discharge of all our business, in the use of all the gifts of God: I come now to consider that part of devotion, which relates to *times* and *hours* of prayer.

I take it for granted, that every Christian, that is in health, is up *early*, in the morning; for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up *early*, because he is a *Christian*, than because he is a *labourer*, or a *tradesman*, or a *servant*, or has business that wants him.

We naturally conceive some abhorrence of a man that is in *bed*, when he should be at his *labour* or in his *shop*. We can't tell how to think any thing good of him, who is such a slave to drowsiness, as to neglect his business for it.

Let this therefore teach us to conceive, how odious we must appear in the sight of heaven, if we are in *bed*, shut up in *sleep* and *darkness*, when we should be praising God; and are such slaves to drowsiness, as to neglect our devotions for it.

For if he is to be blam'd as a *slothful drone*, that rather chuses the lazy indulgence of sleep, than to perform his proper share of worldly business; how much more is he to be reproach'd, that had rather lie folded up in a bed, than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration?

Prayer is the neareſt approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the nobleſt exerciſe of the ſoul, the moſt exalted uſe of our beſt faculties, and the higheſt imitation of the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, ſending up holy deſires to the throne of grace, we are then in our higheſt ſtate, we are upon the utmoſt heights of human greatneſs; we are not before *kings* and *princes*, but in the preſence and audience of the *Lord* of all the world, and can be no higher, till death is ſwallow'd up in glory.

On the other hand, *ſleep* is the *pooreſt*, *dulleſt*, refreſhment of the body, that is ſo far from being intended as an *enjoyment*, that we are forc'd to receive it either in a ſtate of *inſenſibility*, or in the folly of *dreams*.

Sleep is ſuch a *dull*, *ſtupid* ſtate of exiſtence, that even amongſt *mere animals*, we deſpiſe them moſt, which are moſt drowſy.

He therefore that chuſes, to enlarge the ſlothful indulgence of ſleep, rather than be *early* at his devotions to God; chuſes the dulleſt refreſhment of the body, before the higheſt, nobleſt employment of the ſoul; he chuſes that ſtate, which is a reproach to mere *animals*, rather than that exerciſe, which is the glory of *Angels*.

You will perhaps ſay, tho' you riſe *late*, yet you are always careful of your devotions when you are up.

It may be ſo. But what then? Is it well done of you to riſe late, becauſe you pray when

when you are up? Is it pardonable to waſte great part of the day in bed, becauſe ſome time after you ſay your prayers;

It is as much your duty to riſe to pray, as to pray when you are riſen. And if you are late at your prayers, you offer to God the prayers of an idle, ſlothful worſhipper, that riſes to prayers, as idle ſervants riſe to their labour.

Farther, if you fancy that you are careful of your devotions, when you are up, though it be your *cuſtom* to riſe late, you deceive your ſelf; for you cannot perform your devotions as you ought. For he that cannot deny himſelf this drowſy indulgence, but muſt paſs away good part of the morning in it, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for *faſting*, *abſtinence*, or any other *ſelf-denial*. He may indeed more eaſily read over a *form* of prayer, than he can perform theſe duties; but he is no more diſpoſed to enter into the *true ſpirit* of prayer, than he is diſpoſed to *faſting*. For ſleep thus indulged, gives a *ſoftneſs* and *idleneſs* to all our tempers, and makes us unable to reliſh any thing, but what ſuits with an *idle ſtate* of mind, and gratifies our natural tempers, as ſleep does. So that a perſon that is a ſlave to this idleneſs, is in the *ſame temper* when he is up; and though he is not aſleep, yet he is under the effects of it; and every thing that is *idle*, *indulgent*, or *ſenſual*, pleaſes him for the ſame reaſon that ſleep pleaſes him; and

on the other hand, every thing that requires *care*, or *trouble*, or *ſelf-denial*, is hateful to him, for the ſame reaſon that he hates to riſe. He that places any happineſs in this morning indulgence, would be glad to have all the day made happy in the ſame manner; though not with ſleep, yet with *ſuch enjoyments* as gratify and indulge the body in the ſame manner as ſleep does; or at leaſt, with ſuch as come as near to it as they can. The remembrance of a warm bed is in his mind all the day, and he is glad when he is not one of thoſe that ſit ſtarving in a *Church*.

Now you don't imagine, that ſuch a one can truly mortify that body which he thus indulges; yet you might as well think this, as that he can truly perform his devotions; or live in ſuch a drowſy ſtate of indulgence, and yet reliſh the joys of a *ſpiritual life*.

For ſurely, no one will pretend to ſay, that he knows and feels the true happineſs of prayer, who does not think it worth his while to be *early* at it.

It is not poſſible in nature, for an *Epicure* to be truly devout; he muſt renounce this habit of ſenſuality, before he can reliſh the happineſs of devotion.

Now he that turns ſleep into an *idle indulgence*, does as much to corrupt and diſorder his ſoul, to make it a ſlave to bodily appetites, and keep it incapable of all devout and heavenly tempers, as he that turns the neceſſities

ceſſities of eating, into a courſe of indulgence.

A perſon that eats and drinks too much, does not feel ſuch effects from it, as thoſe do, who live in *notorious* inſtances of gluttony and intemperance; but yet his courſe of indulgence, though it be not *ſcandalous* in the eyes of the world, nor ſuch as *torments* his own conſcience, is a great and conſtant hindrance to his improvement in virtue; it gives him *eyes that ſee not*, and *ears that hear not*; it creates a ſenſuality in the ſoul, increaſes the power of bodily paſſions, and makes him incapable of entring into the true ſpirit of Religion.

Now this is the caſe of thoſe who waſte their time in *ſleep*; it does not *diſorder* their lives, or *wound* their conſciences, as *notorious acts* of intemperance do; but like any other more moderate courſe of indulgence, it ſilently, and by ſmaller degrees, wears away the ſpirit of religion, and ſinks the ſoul into a ſtate of dulneſs and ſenſuality.

If you conſider devotion only as a *time* of ſo much prayer, you may perhaps perform it, though you live in this daily indulgence: But if you conſider it as a *ſtate* of the heart, as a *lively fervour* of the ſoul, that is deeply affected with a ſenſe of its own miſery and infirmities, and deſiring the ſpirit of God more than all things in the world, you will find that the ſpirit of indulgence, and the ſpirit of prayer, cannot ſubſiſt together. Mortification,

cation, of *all kinds*, is the very life and ſoul of piety; but he that has not ſo ſmall a degree of it, as to be able to be early at his prayers, can have no reaſon to think that he has taken up his croſs, and is following Chriſt.

What conqueſt has he got over himſelf? What right hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepar'd for? What ſacrifice is he ready to offer unto God; who cannot be ſo cruel to himſelf, as to riſe to prayer at ſuch time, as the drudging part of the world are content to riſe to their labour.

Some people will not ſcruple to tell you that they indulge themſelves in ſleep, becauſe they have *nothing* to do; and that if they had either *buſineſs* or *pleaſure* to riſe to, they would not loſe ſo much of their time in ſleep. But ſuch people muſt be told, that they miſtake the matter; that they have a great deal of buſineſs to do; they have a *harden'd heart* to change; they have the *whole ſpirit* of Religion to get. For ſurely, he that thinks devotion to be of leſs moment than buſineſs or pleaſure; or that he has nothing to do, becauſe nothing but his prayers want him, may be juſtly ſaid to have the whole ſpirit of Religion to ſeek.

You muſt not therefore conſider, how ſmall a crime it is to a *riſe late*, but you muſt conſider how great a miſery it is to want the *ſpirit* of Religion to have a heart not rightly affected with prayer; and to live in ſuch ſoftneſs

neſs and idleneſs, as makes you incapable of the moſt fundamental duties of a truly chriſtian and ſpiritual life.

This is the right way of judging of the crime of waſting great part of your time in bed.

You muſt not conſider the thing barely in it ſelf, but what it proceeds from; what virtues it ſhews to be wanting; what vices it naturally ſtrengthens. For every habit of this kind diſcovers the *ſtate* of the ſoul, and plainly ſhews the *whole turn* of your mind.

If our bleſſed Lord uſed to pray early before day; if he ſpent whole nights in prayer; if the devout *Anna* was day and night in the temple; if St. *Paul* and *Silas* at midnight ſang praiſes unto God; if the *primitive Chriſtians*, for ſeveral hundred years, beſides their hours of prayer in the day-time, met publickly in the Churches at *midnight*, to join in Pſalms and Prayers, is it not certain that theſe practices ſhew'd the *ſtate* of their heart? Are they not ſo many plain proofs of the *whole turn* of their minds?

And if you live in a contrary ſtate, waſting great part of every day in ſleep, thinking any time ſoon enough to be at your prayers; is it not equally certain, that this practice as much ſhews the ſtate of your heart, and the whole turn of your mind?

So that if this indulgence is your way of life, you have as much reaſon to believe your ſelf deſtitute of the true ſpirit of devotion, as

as you have, to believe the Apostles and Saints of the Primitive Church were truly devout. For as their way of life was a demonstration of their devotion, so a contrary way of life is as strong a proof of a want of devotion.

When you read the Scriptures, you see a Religion that is all *life*, and *spirit*, and *joy*, in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires, and bodily indulgences, to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see christians represented as temples of the holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins, that have their lamps always burning, in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers?

When you look into the writings and lives of the first christians, you see the same spirit that you see in the Scriptures. All is reality, life, and action. Watching and prayers, self-denial and mortification, was the common business of their lives.

From that time to this, there has been no person like them, eminent for piety, who has not, like them, been eminent for self-denial and mortification. This is the only royal way that leads to a kingdom.

But how far are you from this way of life, or rather how contrary to it, if instead of imitating their austerity and mortification, you

you can't ſo much as renounce ſo poor an indulgence, as to be able to riſe to your prayers? If ſelf-denials and bodily ſufferings, if watchings and faſtings, will be marks of glory at the day of Judgment, where muſt we hide our heads, that have ſlumber'd away our time in ſloth and ſoftneſs?

You perhaps now find ſome pretences, to excuſe your ſelf from that ſeverity of faſting and ſelf-denial, which the firſt chriſtians practis'd. You fancy that human nature is grown weaker, and that the difference of *Climates*, may make it not poſſible for you to obſerve their methods of ſelf-denial and auſterity, in theſe colder countries.

But all this is but pretence; for the change is not in the *outward* ſtate of things, but in the *inward* ſtate of our minds. When there is the ſame ſpirit in us, that there was in the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, when we feel the weight of Religion, as they did, when we have their faith and hope, we ſhall take up our croſs, and deny our ſelves, and live in ſuch methods of mortification as they did.

Had St. *Paul* liv'd in a cold country, had he had a conſtitution made weak with a *ſickly ſtomach* and often *infirmities*, he would have done as he advis'd *Timothy*, he would have mix'd a little wine with his water.

But ſtill he would have liv'd in a ſtate of ſelf-denial and mortification. He would have given this ſame account of himſelf. *I there-*

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fore ſo run, not as uncertainly, ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air; But I keep under my body, and bring it unto ſubjection, leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

After all, let it now be ſuppos'd, that you imagine there is no neceſſity for you to be ſo ſober and vigilant, ſo fearful of your ſelf, ſo watchful over your paſſions, ſo apprehenſive of danger, ſo careful of your ſalvation, as the *Apoſtles* were. Let it be ſuppos'd, that you imagine that you want leſs ſelf-denial and mortification, to ſubdue your bodies, and purify your ſouls, than they wanted; that you need not have your loins girt, and your lamps burning as they had, will you therefore live in a quite contrary ſtate? Will you make your life as conſtant a courſe of ſoftneſs and indulgence, as theirs was of ſtrictneſs and ſelf-denial.

If therefore, you ſhould think that you have time ſufficient, both for prayer and other duties, though you riſe late; yet let me perſuade you to riſe early, as an inſtance of *ſelf denial.* It is ſo ſmall a one, that if you cannot comply with it, you have no reaſon to think your ſelf capable of any other.

If I was to deſire you, not to ſtudy the gratifications of your *palate*, in the niceties of meats and drinks, I would not inſiſt much upon the crime of waſting your money in ſuch a way, though it be a great one; but I would

would desire you to renounce such a way of life, because it supports you in such a state of sensuality and indulgence, as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of Religion.

For the same reason, I don't insist much on the crime of wasting so much of your time in sleep, though it be a great one, but I desire you to renounce this indulgence, because it gives a softness and idleness to your soul; and is so contrary to that *lively*, *zealous*, *watchful*, *self-denying* spirit, which was not only the spirit of Christ and his Apostles, the spirit of all the saints and martyrs which have ever been amongst men, but must be the spirit of all those who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

Here therefore, we must fix our charge against this practice; we must blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a *general habit*, that extends it self through our whole spirit, and supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety; not as accidental slips and mistakes in life are contrary to it, but in such a manner, as an ill habit of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you was to rise early every morning, as an instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would find mighty advantages from it. This method, though

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it ſeems ſuch a ſmall circumſtance of life, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it conſtantly in your head, that ſoftneſs and idleneſs were to be avoided, that ſelf-denial was a part of Chriſtianity. It would teach you to exerciſe power over yourſelf, and make you able by degrees to renounce other pleaſures and tempers that war againſt the ſoul.

This one rule would teach you to think of others; it would diſpoſe your mind to exactneſs, and be very likely to bring the remaining part of the day, under rules of prudence and devotion.

But above all, one certain benefit from this method you will be ſure of having, it will beſt fit and prepare you for the reception of the holy Spirit. When you thus begin the day in the ſpirit of religion, renouncing ſleep, becauſe you are to renounce ſoftneſs, and redeem your time; this diſpoſition, as it puts your heart into a good ſtate, ſo it will procure the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit; what is ſo planted and watered, will certainly have an increaſe from God. You will then ſpeak from your heart, you ſoul will be awake, your prayers will refreſh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you ſay, and begin to know what ſaints and holy men have meant, by fervours of devotion.

He that is thus prepared for prayer, who riſes with theſe diſpoſitions, is in a very different ſtate from him, who has no rules of this kind;

kind; who riſes by chance as he happens to be weary of his bed, or is able to ſleep no longer. If ſuch a one prays only with his mouth; if his heart feels nothing of that which he ſays; if his prayers are only things of courſe; if they are a lifeleſs form of words, which he only repeats becauſe they are ſoon ſaid, there is nothing to be wondered at in all this: for ſuch diſpoſitions are the natural effect of ſuch a ſtate of life.

Hoping therefore, that you are now enough convinced of the neceſſity of riſing early to your prayers, I ſhall proceed to lay before you a method of daily prayer.

I don't take upon me to preſcribe to you the uſe of any *particular forms* of prayer, but only to ſhew you the neceſſity of praying at ſuch times, and in ſuch a manner.

You will here find ſome helps, how to furniſh yourſelf with ſuch *forms* of prayer, as ſhall be uſeful to you. And if you are ſuch a proficient in the ſpirit of devotion, that your heart is always ready to pray in its own language, in this caſe I preſs no neceſſity of borrow'd forms.

For tho' I think a form of prayer very *neceſſary* and *expedient* for *public* worſhip, yet if any one can find a better way of raiſing his heart unto God in private, than by *prepared forms* of prayer, I have nothing to object againſt it; my deſign being only to aſſiſt and direct ſuch as ſtand in need of aſſiſtance.

Thus much, I believe, is certain, that the *generality* of Chriſtians ought to uſe *forms* of prayer, at all the regular times of prayer. It ſeems right for every one to begin with a *form* of prayer; and if in the midſt of his devotions, he finds his heart ready to break forth into new and higher ſtrains of devotion, he ſhould leave his *form* for a while, and follow thoſe fervours of his heart, till it again wants the aſſiſtance of his uſual petitions.

This ſeems to be the *true liberty* of *private* devotion; it ſhould be under the direction of ſome *form*; but not ſo ty'd down to it, but that it may be free to take ſuch new expreſſions, as its preſent fervours happen to furniſh it with; which ſometimes are more affecting, and carry the ſoul more powerfully to God, than any expreſſions that were ever uſed before,

All people that have ever made any reflections upon what paſſes in their own hearts, muſt know that they are mighty changeable in regard to devotion. Sometimes our hearts are ſo *awaken'd*, have ſuch *ſtrong* apprehenſions of the divine Preſence, are ſo full of *deep* compunction for our ſins, that we cannot confeſs them in any language, but that of *tears*,

Sometimes the light of God's countenance ſhines ſo bright upon us, we ſee ſo far into the inviſible world, we are ſo affected with the wonders of the love and goodneſs of God, that our hearts worſhip and adore in a language higher

higher than that of words, and we feel tranſports of devotion, which only can be felt.

On the other hand, ſometimes we are ſo *ſunk* into our bodies, ſo *dull* and *unaffected* with that which concerns our ſouls, that our hearts are as much too low for our prayers; we cannot keep pace with our *forms* of confeſſion, or feel half of that in our hearts which we have in our mouths; we thank and praiſe God with forms of words, but our hearts have little or no ſhare in them.

It is therefore highly neceſſary, to provide againſt this *inconſtancy* of our hearts, by having at hand ſuch *forms* of prayer, as may beſt ſuit us when our hearts are in their *beſt* ſtate, and alſo be moſt likely to raiſe and ſtir them up, when they are *ſunk* into *dulneſs*. For as words have a power of affecting our hearts on all occaſions, as the ſame thing differently expreſſed has different effects upon our minds; ſo it is reaſonable, that we ſhould make this advantage of language, and provide ourſelves with ſuch forms of expreſſions, as are moſt likely to move and enliven our ſouls, and fill them with ſentiments ſuitable to them.

The firſt thing that you are to do, when you are upon your *knees*, is to ſhut your *eyes*, and with a ſhort *ſilence* let your ſoul place itſelf in the preſence of God; that is, you are to uſe this, or ſome other better method, to ſeparate yourſelf from all common thoughts, and make your heart as ſenſible as you can of the divine preſence.

Now if this recollection of ſpirit is neceſſary, as who can ſay it is not? then how poorly muſt they perform their devotions, who are always in a *hurry*; who begin them in haſte, and hardly allow themſelves time to repeat their very *form*, with any gravity or attention? Theirs is properly *ſaying* prayers, inſtead of *praying*.

To proceed; if you was to uſe yourſelf (as far as you can) to pray always in the *ſame* place; if you was to reſerve that place for devotion, and not allow yourſelf to do any thing common in it; if you was never to be there yourſelf, but in times of devotion; if any *little room*, (or if that cannot be) if any particular *part* of a room was thus uſed, this kind of conſecration of it, as a place *holy* unto God, would have an effect upon your mind, and diſpoſe you to ſuch tempers, as would very much aſſiſt your devotion. For by having a place thus ſacred in your *room*, it would in ſome meaſure reſemble a *chapel* or *houſe* of God. This would diſpoſe you to be always in the ſpirit of religion, when you was there; and fill you with *wiſe* and *holy* thoughts, when you was by yourſelf. Your own apartment would raiſe in your mind ſuch ſentiments, as you have, when you ſtand near an *altar*; and you would be afraid of thinking or doing any thing that was *fooliſh* near that place, which is the place of prayer, and holy intercourſe with God.

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When you begin your petitions, uſe ſuch various expreſſions of the attributes of God, as may make you moſt ſenſible of the greatneſs and power of the divine Nature.

Begin therefore in words like theſe: *O Being of all beings, Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and angels,* whoſe *univerſal* Spirit is every where preſent, giving *life* and *light*, and *joy*, to all angels in *heaven*, and all creatures upon *earth*, &c.

For theſe repreſentions of the divine Attributes, which ſhew us in ſome degree the majeſty and greatneſs of God, are an excellent means of raiſing our hearts into lively acts of worſhip and adoration.

What is the reaſon that moſt people are ſo much affected with this petition in the *Burial Service* of our Church : *Yet, O Lord God moſt holy, O Lord moſt mighty, O holy and moſt merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death?* It is, becauſe the joining together ſo many *great expreſſions*, gives ſuch a deſcription of the greatneſs of the Divine Majeſty, as naturally affects every ſenſible mind.

Altho' therefore prayer does not conſiſt in *fine words*, or *ſtudy'd expreſſions*; yet as words ſpeak to the ſoul, as they have a certain power of raiſing thoughts in the ſoul; ſo thoſe words which ſpeak of God in the *higheſt* manner, which moſt *fully* expreſs the power and preſence of God, which raiſe thoughts in the ſoul moſt ſuitable to the greatneſs and providence

of God, are the moſt uſeful, and moſt edifying in our prayers.

When you direct any of your petitions to our bleſſed Lord, let it be in ſome expreſſions of this kind: *O Saviour of the world, God of God, Light of Light; thou that art the Brightneſs of thy Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon; thou that art the* Alpha *and* Omega, *the Beginning and End of all things; thou that haſt deſtroyed the power of the devil, that haſt overcome death; thou that art entred into the Holy of Holies, that ſitteſt at the right hand of the Father, that art high above all thrones and principalities, that makeſt interceſſion for all the world; thou that art the judge of the quick and dead; thou that wilt ſpeedily come down in thy Father's glory, to reward all men according to their works, be thou my light and my peace,* &c.

For ſuch repreſentations, which deſcribe ſo many *characters* of our ſaviour's nature and power, are not only proper acts of *adoration*, but will, if they are repeated with any attention, fill our hearts with the higheſt fervours of true devotion.

Again, if you aſk any particular grace of our bleſſed Lord, let it be in ſome manner like this:

O holy Jeſus, Son of the moſt high God, thou that waſt ſcourged at a pillar, ſtretched and nailed upon a croſs, for the ſins of the world, unite me to thy croſs, and fill my ſoul with thy holy, humble, and ſuffering ſpirit. O Fountain

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of mercy, thou that didſt ſave the thief upon the croſs, ſave me from the guilt of a ſinful life; thou that didſt caſt ſeven devils out of Mary Magdalene, *caſt out of my heart all evil thoughts, and wicked tempers. O Giver of life, thou that didſt raiſe* Lazarus *from the dead, raiſe up my ſoul from the death and darkneſs of ſin. Thou that didſt give to thy Apoſtles power over unclean ſpirits, give me power over my own heart. Thou that didſt appear unto thy diſciples when the doors were ſhut, do thou appear unto me in the ſecret apartment of my heart. Thou that didſt cleanſe the lepers, heal the ſick, and give ſight to the blind, cleanſe my heart, heal the diſorders of my ſoul, and fill me with heavenly light.*

Now theſe kind of appeals have a double advantage; firſt, as they are ſo many proper acts of our *faith*, whereby we not only ſhew our belief of the *miracles* of Chriſt, but turn them at the ſame time into ſo many inſtances of worſhip and adoration.

Secondly, As they ſtrengthen and increaſe the faith of our prayers, by preſenting to our minds ſo many inſtances of that *power* and *goodneſs*, which we call upon for our own aſſiſtance.

For he that appeals to Chriſt, as caſting out *devils*, and raiſing the *dead*, has then a powerful motive in his mind to pray earneſtly, and depend faithfully upon his aſſiſtance.

Again; in order to fill your prayers with excellent ſtrains of devotion, it may be of uſe to you to obſerve this farther rule:

When at any time either in reading the *Scripture*, or any book of *Piety*, you meet with a passage, that more than ordinarily affects your mind, and seems as it were to give your heart a new motion towards God, you should try to turn it into the *form* of a petition, and then give it a place in your prayers. By this means, you would be often improving your prayers, and storing yourself with proper forms of making the desires of your heart known unto God.

At all the *stated hours* of prayer, it will be of great benefit to you, to have something *fix'd*, and something at *liberty*, in your devotions.

You should have some *fix'd* subject, which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time; and yet have liberty to add such *other petitions*, as your condition may then require.

For instance; As the *morning* is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper, that your *first* devotions should be a *praise* and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you should offer and devote *body* and *soul*, all that you *are*, and all that you *have*, to his service and glory.

Receive therefore every day, as a *resurrection* from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every *rising sun* with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen *it*, and all things,

new

new created upon your account and under the ſenſe of ſo great a bleſſing, let your joyful heart praiſe and magnify ſo good and glorious a Creator.

Let therefore *praiſe* and *thankſgiving*, and *oblation* of yourſelf unto God, be always the *fixed* and *certain* ſubject of your *firſt* prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding ſuch other devotions, as the *accidental* difference of your *ſtate*, or the *accidental* difference of your *heart*, ſhall then make moſt needful and expedient for you.

For one of the greateſt benefits of *private* devotion, conſiſts in rightly adapting our prayers to theſe two conditions, the difference of our *ſtate*, and the difference of our *hearts*.

By the difference of our *ſtate*, is meant the difference of our *external ſtate* or condition, as of *ſickneſs*, *health*, *pains*, *loſſes*, *diſappointments*, *troubles*, particular *mercies* or *judgments* from God; all ſorts of *kindneſſes*, *injuries* or *reproaches* from other people.

Now as theſe are great parts of our ſtate of life, as they make great difference in it, by continually changing; ſo our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us, when it watches to receive and ſanctify all theſe *changes* of our ſtate, and turns them all into ſo many occaſions of a more particular application to God, of ſuch thankſgivings, ſuch reſignation, ſuch petitions, as our preſent ſtate more eſpecially requires.

And

And he that makes every change in his ſtate, a reaſon of preſenting unto God ſome particular petitions ſuitable to that change, will ſoon find, that he has taken an excellent means, not only of *praying* with fervour, but of *living* as he prays.

The next condition, to which we are always to adapt ſome part of our prayers, is the *difference* of our *hearts*; by which is meant the different ſtate of the tempers of our hearts, as of *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *tranquillity*; *dulneſs* and *drineſs* of *ſpirit*, *anxiety*, *diſcontent*, *motions* of *envy* and *ambition*, *dark* and *diſconſolate thoughts*, *reſentments*, *fretfulneſs*, and *peeviſh tempers*.

Now as theſe tempers, through the weakneſs of our nature, will have their ſucceſſion more or leſs, even in pious minds; ſo we ſhould conſtantly make the *preſent ſtate* of our heart, the reaſon of ſome particular application to God.

If we are in the delightful calm of ſweet and eaſy paſſions, of *love* and *joy* in God, we ſhould then offer the grateful tribute of thankſgiving to God, for the poſſeſſion of ſo much happineſs, thankfully owning and acknowledging him as the bountiful Giver of it all.

If on the other hand, we feel ourſelves laden with *heavy* paſſions, with *dulneſs* of ſpirit, *anxiety* and *uneaſineſs*, we muſt then look up to God in acts of humility, confeſſing our unworthineſs, opening our troubles to him, beſeeching him in his good time to leſſen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver us from

from ſuch paſſions as oppoſe the purity and perfection of our ſouls.

Now by thus watching, and attending to the preſent ſtate of our hearts, and ſuiting ſome of our petitions exactly to their wants, we ſhall not only be well acquainted with the diſorders of our ſouls, but alſo be well exercis'd in the method of curing them.

By this prudent and wiſe application of our prayers, we ſhall get all the relief from them that is poſſible; and the very *changeableneſs* of our hearts, will prove a means of exerciſing a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now by all that has here been ſaid, you will eaſily perceive, that perſons careful of the greateſt benefit of prayer, ought to have a great ſhare in the forming and compoſing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers, which is always fix'd to one certain ſubject, in that they may uſe the help of forms compos'd by other perſons; but in that part of their prayers, which they are always to ſuit to the preſent *ſtate* of their *life*, and the *preſent* ſtate of their *heart*, there they muſt let the ſenſe of their own condition help them to ſuch kinds of *petition*, *thankſgiving*, or *reſignation*, as their preſent ſtate more eſpecially requires.

Happy are they, who have this buſineſs and employment upon their hands!

And

And now, if people of leiſure, whether men, or women, who are ſo much at a loſs how to diſpoſe of their time, who are forc'd into poor contrivances, idle viſits and ridiculous diverſions, merely to get rid of hours that hang heavily upon their hands; if ſuch were to appoint ſome certain ſpaces of their time, to the ſtudy of devotion, ſearching after all the means and helps to attain a devout ſpirit. If they were to collect the beſt *forms* of devotion, to uſe themſelves to tranſcribe the fineſt paſſages of *ſcripture-prayers*; if they were to collect the devotions, confeſſions, petitions, praiſes, reſignations, and thankſgivings, which are ſcattered up and down in the Pſalms, and range them under proper heads, as ſo much proper fuel for the flame of their own devotion. If their minds were often thus employ'd, ſometimes meditating upon them, ſometimes getting them by heart, and making them as habitual as their own thoughts, how fervently would they pray, who came thus prepar'd to prayer?

And how much better would it be, to make this benefit of *leiſure-time*, than to be *dully* and *idly* loſt in the poor impertinencies of a *playing*, *viſiting*, *wandring* life?

How much better would it be, to be thus furniſh'd with hymns and anthems of the ſaints, and teach their ſouls to aſcend to God, than to *corrupt*, *bewilder* and *confound* their hearts, with the *wild fancies*, the *luſtful* thoughts of lewd Poet?

Now

Now though people of leiſure ſeem call'd more particularly to this ſtudy of devotion, yet perſons of much buſineſs or labour, muſt not think themſelves excus'd from this, or ſome better method of improving their devotion.

For the greater their buſineſs is, the more need they have of ſome ſuch method as this, to prevent its power over their hearts; to ſecure them from ſinking into worldly tempers, and preſerve a ſenſe and taſte of heavenly things in their minds. And a little time *regularly* and *conſtantly* employ'd to any one *uſe* or *end*, will do great things, and produce mighty effects.

And it is for want of conſidering devotion in this *light*, as ſomething that is to be nurs'd and cheriſh'd with care, as ſomething that is to be made part of our buſineſs, that is to be improv'd with care and contrivance, by art and method, and a diligent uſe of the beſt helps; it is for want of conſidering it in this light, that ſo many people are ſo little benefited by it, and live and die ſtrangers to that ſpirit of devotion, which by a prudent uſe of proper means, they might have enjoy'd in a high degree.

For though the ſpirit of devotion is the gift of God, and not attainable by any *mere* power of our own, yet is it moſtly given, and *never withheld*, from thoſe, who by a wiſe and diligent uſe of proper means, prepare themſelves for the reception of it.

And

And it is amazing to ſee, how eagerly men employ their *parts*, their *ſagacity*, *time*, *ſtudy*, *application* and *exerciſe*; how all helps are call'd to their aſſiſtance, when any thing is intended and deſir'd in worldly matters; and how *dull*, *negligent*, and unimprov'd they are, how little they uſe their *parts*, *ſagacity*, and abilities, to raiſe and increaſe their devotion!

Mundanus is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehenſion. He is well advanc'd in age, and has made a great figure in buſineſs. Every part of *trade* and buſineſs that has fallen in his way, has had ſome improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing any thing well, to its greateſt height. *Mundanus* aims at the greateſt perfection in every thing. The *ſoundneſs* and *ſtrength* of his mind, and his juſt way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of *trade*, *building*, or improving *land*, or *manufactures*. The clearneſs and ſtrength of his underſtanding, which he is conſtantly improving, by continual exerciſe in theſe matters, by often digeſting his thoughts in writing, and trying every thing every way, has render'd him a great maſter of moſt concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increaſing his *knowledge* and *judgment*, as faſt as his years came upon him.

The

The one only thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor receiv'd any benefit from his judicious mind, is his *devotion:* This is juſt in the ſame *poor* ſtate it was, when he was only ſix years of age, and the *old man* prays now, in that litle form of words, which his mother us'd to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever ſaw the pooreſt *utenſil*, or ever took the meaneſt *trifle* into his hand, without conſidering how it might be *made*, or *us'd* to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the ſame manner, as when he was a *child*; without ever conſidering how much *better* or *oftner* he might pray; without conſidering how improveable the ſpirit of devotion is, how many helps a wiſe and reaſonable man may call to his aſſiſtance, and how neceſſary it is, that our prayers ſhould be enlarg'd, vary'd, and ſuited to the particular ſtate and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* ſees a book of *devotion*, he paſſes it by, as he does a *ſpelling-book*, becauſe he remembers that he learn'd to *pray* ſo many years ago under his *mother*, when he learnt to *ſpell*.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of ſenſe, who has ſo much judgment and underſtanding in every thing, but that which is the *whole wiſdom* of man?

And how miſerably do many people, more or leſs imitate this conduct?

All which ſeems to be owing to a ſtrange infatuated ſtate of negligence, which keeps people from conſidering what *devotion* is. For if they did but once proceed ſo far, as to *reflect* about it, or aſk themſelves any queſtions concerning it, they would ſoon ſee, that the ſpirit of *devotion* was like any other *ſenſe* or *underſtanding*, that is only to be improv'd by *ſtudy*, *care*, *application*, and the *uſe* of ſuch *means* and *helps*, as are neceſſary to make a man a proficient in any art, or ſcience.

Claſſicus is a man of learning, and well vers'd in all the beſt authors of antiquity. He has read them ſo much, that he has enter'd into their ſpirit, and can very ingeniouſly imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can expreſs himſelf in their language. He is ſo great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights of a young ſcholar he never fails to adviſe him concerning his ſtudies.

Claſſicus tells his young man, he muſt not think that he has done enough, when he has only learnt *languages*; but that he muſt be daily converſant with the beſt authors, read them again and again, catch their ſpirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himſelf a man of *taſte* and *judgment*.

How wiſe might *Claſſicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in the

the world, if he had but thought as *juſtly* of *devotion*, as he does of *learning?*

He never, indeed, ſays any thing *ſhocking* or *offenſive* about *devotion*, becauſe he never *thinks*, or *talks* about it. It ſuffers nothing from him, but neglect and diſregard.

The two Teſtaments would not have had ſo much as a place amongſt his Books, but that they are both to be had in *Greek*.

Claſſicus thinks that he ſufficiently ſhews his regard for the holy Scripture, when he tells you, that he has no other Books of piety beſides them.

It is very well, *Claſſicus*, that you prefer the Bible to all other Books of piety; he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety beſides the *Bible*, becauſe it is the beſt, How comes it, *Claſſicus*, that you don't content your ſelf with *one* of the *beſt* Books amongſt the *Greeks* and *Romans?* How comes it that you are ſo greedy and eager after *all* of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a neceſſary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are ſo earneſt, ſo laborious, ſo expenſive of your time and money, to reſtore *broken periods*, and *ſcraps* of the ancients?

How comes it that you read ſo many *Commentators* upon *Cicero*, *Horace*, and *Homer*, and not one upon the Goſpel? How comes it

that your love of *Cicero*, and *Ovid*, makes you love to read an *author* that writes like them; and yet your *eſteem* for the *Goſpel* gives you no deſire, nay, prevents your reading ſuch Books, as breathe the very ſpirit of the Goſpel?

How comes it that you tell your *young ſcholar*, he muſt not content himſelf with barely underſtanding his authors, but muſt be continually reading them *all*, as the only means of entering into their ſpirit, and forming his own judgment according to them?

Why then muſt the Bible lye alone in your ſtudy? Is not the ſpirit of the ſaints, the piety of the holy followers of Jeſus Chriſt, as good and neceſſary a means of entering into the ſpirit and *taſte* of the Goſpel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the ſpirit of antiquity?

Is the ſpirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of Poets and Orators? And is not the ſpirit of devotion to be got in the ſame way, by frequent reading the holy thoughts, and pious ſtrains of devout men?

Is your young Poet to ſearch after *every line*, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination? And is it not as reaſonable for him, who deſires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to ſearch after every ſtrain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his ſoul?

Do

Do you adviſe your *Orator* to tranſlate the beſt Orations, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exerciſing his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and ſpeaking juſtly may be form'd in his mind? And is there not the ſame benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man uſe them in the ſame way, that habits of devotion, and aſpiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well form'd in his ſoul?

Now the reaſon why *Claſſicus* does not *think* and judge thus reaſonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a *form* of *words*. It never in his life enter'd into his head, to think of devotion as a *ſtate of the heart*, as an *improveable talent* of the mind, as a *temper* that is to *grow* and *increaſe* like our *reaſon* and *judgment*, and to be form'd in us by ſuch a regular diligent uſe of proper means, as are neceſſary to form any other wiſe habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life, with the *bare letter* of Prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the *ſpirit* of *heathen poets* and *orators*.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of *ſcholars* are *more* or *leſs* chargeable with this exceſſive folly; ſo negligent of improving their devotion, and ſo deſirous of other poor accompliſhments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an *epigram* in the *turn* of *Martial*, than to *live*,

and *think*, and *pray* to God, in the ſpirit of St. *Auſtin*.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary ſpirit, there ſeems to be no more requir'd, than the *bare* belief of the truth of Chriſtianity.

And if you was to aſk *Mundanus*, and *Claſſicus*, or any man of buſineſs, or learning, whether *piety* is not the higheſt perfection of man, or *devotion* the greateſt attainment in the world, they muſt both be forced to anſwer in the affirmative, or elſe give up the truth of the Goſpel.

For to ſet any accompliſhment againſt devotion, or to think any thing, or all things in the world, bears any proportion to its excellency; is the ſame abſurdity in a Chriſtian, as it would be in a *Philoſopher* to prefer a *meal's meat*, to the greateſt improvement in knowledge.

For as *Philoſophy* profeſſes purely the ſearch and enquiry after knowledge, ſo *Chriſtianity* ſuppoſes, intends, deſires and aims at nothing elſe, but the raiſing fallen man to a divine life, to ſuch habits of holineſs, ſuch degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter amongſt the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of Chriſtianity, may be reckon'd an infidel; and he that believes thus much, has *faith* enough to give him a right *judgment* of the *value* of things, to ſupport him in a *ſound mind*, and enable him

him to conquer all the temptations which the world ſhall lay in his way.

To conclude this Chapter. Devotion is nothing elſe but *right apprehenſions*, and *right affections* towards God.

All practices therefore that heighten and improve our true apprehenſions of God, all ways of life that tend to *nouriſh*, *raiſe*, and fix our affections upon him, are to be reckon'd ſo many helps and means to fill us with devotion.

As *Prayer* is the proper fuel of this holy flame, ſo we muſt uſe all our care and contrivance to give prayer its full power; as by *alms*, *ſelf-denial*, frequent *retirements*, and *holy readings*, compoſing *forms* for our ſelves, or uſing the *beſt* we can get, adding *length* of time, and obſerving *hours* of Prayer; *changing*, *improving*, and *ſuiting* our devotions to the condition of our lives, and the ſtate of our hearts.

Thoſe who have moſt leiſure, ſeem more eſpecially call'd to a more eminent obſervance of theſe holy rules of a devout life. And they who by the neceſſity of their ſtate, and not through their own choice, have but little time to employ thus, muſt make the beſt uſe of that little they have.

For this is the certain way of making devotion produce a devout life.

CHAP. XV.

Of chanting, or ſinging of Pſalms in our private devotions. Of the excellency and benefit of this kind of devotion. Of the great effects it hath upon our hearts. Of the means of performing it in the beſt manner.

YOU have ſeen in the foregoing Chapter, what means and methods you are to uſe, to raiſe and improve your devotion. How *early* you are to begin your prayers, and what is to be the *ſubject* of your *firſt devotions* in the morning.

There is one thing ſtill remaining, that you muſt be required to obſerve, not only as fit and proper to be done, but as ſuch as cannot be neglected, without great prejudice to your devotions. And that is, to begin all your Prayers with a *Pſalm*.

This is ſo right, is ſo beneficial to devotion, has ſo much *effect* upon our hearts, that it may be inſiſted upon as a *common* rule for all perſons.

I don't mean, that you ſhould *read* over a Pſalm, but that you ſhould *chant* or *ſing* one of thoſe Pſalms, which we commouly call the *reading Pſalms*. For *ſinging* is as much the *propet* uſe of a *Pſalm*, as *devout ſupplication* is the *proper* uſe of a *form* of Prayer. And a

Pſalm

Pſalm only *read*, is very much like a Prayer that is only *look'd* over.

Now the method of *chanting* a Pſalm, ſuch as is us'd in the Colleges in the *Univerſities*, and in ſome *Churches*, is ſuch as all perſons are capable of. The change of the voice in thus *chanting* of a Pſalm is ſo ſmall and natural, that every body is able to do it, and yet ſufficient to raiſe and keep up the gladneſs of our hearts.

You are therefore to conſider this *chanting* of a Pſalm, as a neceſſary beginning of your devotions, as ſomething that is to *awaken* all that is *good* and *holy* within you, that is to call your *ſpirits* to their proper duty, to ſet you in your beſt *poſture* towards heaven, and tune all the powers of your ſoul to worſhip and adoration.

For there is nothing that ſo clears a way for your prayers, nothing that ſo diſperſes *dulneſs* of heart, nothing that ſo purifies the ſoul from *poor* and *little* paſſions, nothing that ſo *opens* heaven, or carries your heart ſo near it, as theſe *ſongs* of *praiſe*.

They create a ſenſe and delight in God, they awaken holy deſires, they teach you how to aſk, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle an *holy* flame, they turn your heart into an *altar*, your prayers into *incenſe*, and carry them as a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to the throne of Grace.

The difference between ſinging and reading a Pſalm, will eaſily be underſtood, if you

conſider the difference betwen reading and ſinging a *common ſong* that you like. Whilſt you only read it, you only *like* it, and that is all; but as ſoon as you *ſing* it, then you enjoy it, you feel the delight of it, it has got hold of you, your paſſions keep pace with it, and you feel the *ſame ſpirit* within you, that there ſeems to be in the words.

If you was to tell a perſon that has ſuch a ſong, that he need not *ſing* it, that it was ſufficient to *peruſe* it; he would wonder what you mean; and would think you as abſurd, as if you was to tell him, that he ſhould only *look* at his *food*, to ſee whether it was good, but need not *eat* it: For a ſong of praiſe not ſung, is very like any other good thing not made *uſe* of.

You will perhaps ſay, that ſinging is a *particular talent*, that belongs only to particular people, and that you have neither *voice* nor *ear* to make any muſick.

If you had ſaid that ſinging is a *general talent*, and that people differ in that as they do in all other things, you had ſaid ſomething much truer.

For how vaſtly do people differ in the talent of *thinking*, which is not only common to all men, but ſeems to be the very eſſence of human nature? How readily do ſome people reaſon upon every thing? and how hardly do others reaſon upon any thing? How clearly do ſome people diſcourſe upon the moſt abſtruſe

ſtruſe matters? and how confuſedly do others talk upon the plaineſt ſubjects?

Yet no one deſires to be excuſed from *thought*, or *reaſon*, or *diſcourſe*, becauſe he has not theſe *talents*, as ſome people have them. But it is full as juſt, for a perſon to think himſelf excuſed from *thinking* upon God, from *reaſoning* about his duty to him, or *diſcourſing* about the means of ſalvation, becauſe he has not theſe talents in any *fine degree*; this is full as juſt, as for a perſon to think himſelf excuſed from ſinging the praiſes of God, becauſe he has not a fine *ear*, or a muſical *voice*.

For as it is *ſpeaking*, and not *graceful* ſpeaking, that is a requir'd part of prayer; as it is *bowing*, and not *genteel* bowing, that is a proper part of adoration; ſo it is *ſinging*, and not *artful* fine ſinging, that is a requir'd way of praiſing God.

If a perſon was to forbear praying, becauſe he had an *odd tone* in his voice; he would have as good an excuſe as he has, that forbears from *ſinging* Pſalms, becauſe he has but little management of his voice. And as a man's ſpeaking his prayers, tho' in an odd tone, may yet ſufficiently anſwer all the ends of his own devotion; ſo a man's ſinging of a Pſalm, tho' not in a very muſical way, may yet ſufficiently anſwer all the ends of rejoycing in, and praiſing God.

Secondly, This objection might be of ſome weight, if you was deſired to ſing, to entertain

tain other people; but is not to be admitted in the preſent caſe; where you are only required to ſing the praiſes of God, as a part of your own private devotion.

If a perſon that has a very ill voice, and a bad way of ſpeaking, was deſir'd to be the mouth of a congregation, it would be a very proper excuſe for him, to ſay that he had not a voice, or a way of ſpeaking that was proper for prayer. But he would be very abſurd, if for the ſame reaſon he ſhould neglect his own private devotions.

Now this is exactly the caſe of ſinging Pſalms; you may not have the talent of ſinging, ſo as to be able to entertain other people, and therefore it is reaſonable to excuſe your ſelf from it; but if for that reaſon you ſhould excuſe yourſelf from this way of praiſing God, you would be guilty of a great abſurdity: Becauſe ſinging is no more requir'd for the muſick that is made by it, than prayer is requir'd for the fine words that it contains, but as it is the natural and proper expreſſion of a heart rejoycing in God.

Our bleſſed Saviour and his apoſtles ſung an hymn; but it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that they rather *rejoyced* in God, than made *fine* muſick.

Do but ſo live, that your heart may truly rejoyce in God, that it may feel itſelf affected with the praiſes of God, and then you will find, that this ſtate of your heart will neither want a voice, nor ear to find a tune for a Pſalm.

Pſalm. Every one at ſome time or other finds himſelf able to ſing in ſome degree; there are ſome times and occaſions of joy, that make all people ready to expreſs their ſenſe of it in ſome ſort of harmony. The joy that they feel, forces them to let their voice have a part in it.

He therefore that ſaith he wants a voice, or an ear, to ſing a Pſalm, miſtakes the caſe; he wants that *ſpirit* that really rejoices in God; the dulneſs is in his *heart*, and not in his *ear*; and when his heart feels a true joy in God, when it has a full reliſh of what is expreſſed in the Pſalms, he will find it very pleaſant, to make the motions of his voice expreſs the motions of his heart.

Singing indeed, as it is improv'd into an art, as it ſignifies the running of the voice thro' ſuch or ſuch a compaſs of notes, and keeping time with a ſtudy'd variety of changes, is not natural, nor the effect of any natural ſtate of the mind; ſo in this ſenſe, it is not *common* to all people, any more than thoſe *antick* and *invented* motions which make *fine dancing*, are common to all people.

But ſinging, as it ſignifies a motion of the voice ſuitable to the motions of the heart, and the changing of its tone according to the meaning of the words which we utter, is as natural and common to all men, as it is to ſpeak *high* when they *threaten* in anger, or to ſpeak *low* when they are *dejected* and aſk for a *pardon*.

All

All men therefore are ſingers, in the ſame manner as all men *think*, *ſpeak*, *laugh*, and *lament*. For ſinging is no more an invention, than *grief* or *joy* are inventions.

Every ſtate of the heart naturally puts the body into ſome ſtate that is ſuitable to it, and is proper to ſhew it to other people. If a man is *angry*, or *diſdainful*, no one need inſtruct him how to expreſs theſe paſſions by the *tone* of his voice. The *ſtate* of his heart diſpoſes him to a *proper* uſe of his voice.

If therefore there are but *few* ſingers of *divine* ſongs, if people want to be *exhorted* to this *part* of devotion; it is becauſe there are but few, whoſe hearts are *raiſed* to that *height* of piety, as to feel any motions of *joy* and *delight* in the praiſes of God.

Imagine to yourſelf, that you had been with *Moſes* when he was led thro' the *Red Sea*; that you had ſeen the waters divide themſelves, and ſtand on an heap on both ſides; that you had ſeen them held up till you had paſs'd thro', then let fall upon your enemies; do you think that you ſhould then have wanted a *voice* or an *ear* to have ſung with *Moſes*, *The Lord is my ſtrength, and my ſong, and he is become my ſalvation*, &c.? I know, your own heart tells you, that all people muſt have been ſingers upon ſuch an occaſion. Let this therefore teach you, that it is the heart that tunes a voice to ſing the praiſes of God; and that if you can't ſing theſe ſame words now with joy, it is becauſe you are not ſo affected

fected with the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, as the *Jews* were, or you yourself would have been, with their deliverance at the *Red* sea.

That it is the state of the heart that disposes us to rejoyce in any particular kind of singing, may be easily proved from variety of observations upon human nature. An *old debauchee* may, according to the language of the world, have neither *voice* nor ear, if you only sing a *Psalm*, or a song in praise of *virtue* to him; but yet if in some *easy tune* you sing something that celebrates his *former debauches*, he will then, tho' he has no *teeth* in his head, shew you, that he has both a *voice* and an *ear* to join in such musick. You then awaken his heart, and he as *naturally* sings to such words, as he laughs when he is pleas'd. And this will be the case in every song that touches the heart; if you celebrate the ruling passion of any man's heart, you put his voice in tune to join with you.

Thus if you can find a man, whose *ruling temper* is devotion, whose heart is full of God, his voice will rejoice in those songs of praise, which glorify that God, that is the joy of his heart, tho' he has neither voice nor ear for other musick. Would you therefore delightfully perform this part of devotion, it is not so necessary to learn a *tune*, or practise upon *notes*, as to prepare your heart; for, as our blessed Lord saith, out of the heart proceed *evil thoughts*, *murders*, &c. so it is equally true,

true, that out of the heart proceed *holy joys, thankſgiving* and *praiſe*. If you can once ſay with *David, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*; it will be very eaſy and natural to add, as he did, *I will ſing and give praiſe*, &c.

Secondly, Let us now conſider another reaſon for this kind of devotion. As ſinging is a natural *effect* of joy in the heart, ſo it has alſo a natural power of rendering the heart joyful.

The ſoul and body are ſo united, that they have each of them power over one another in their actions. Certain thoughts and ſentiments in the ſoul, produce ſuch and ſuch motions or actions in the body; and on the other hand, certain motions and actions of the body, have the ſame power of raiſing ſuch and ſuch thoughts and ſentiments in the ſoul. So that as ſinging is the natural *effect* of joy in the mind, ſo it is as truly a natural *cauſe* of raiſing joy in the mind.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, ſo outward acts of prayer are natural means of raiſing the devotion of the heart.

It is thus in all ſtates and tempers of the mind; as the inward ſtate of the mind produces outward actions ſuitable to it, ſo thoſe outward actions have the like power of raiſing an inward ſtate of mind ſuitable to them.

As

As *anger* produces angry words, ſo angry words increaſe anger.

So that if we barely conſider human nature, we ſhall find, that *ſinging* or *chanting* the Pſalms, is as proper and neceſſary to raiſe our hearts to a delight in God, as prayer is proper and neceſſary to excite in us the ſpirit of devotion. Every reaſon for one, is in all reſpects as ſtrong a reaſon for the other.

If therefore you would know the reaſon and neceſſity of ſinging Pſalms, you muſt conſider the reaſon and neceſſity of praiſing and rejoicing in God; becauſe ſinging of Pſalms is as much the true exerciſe and ſupport of this ſpirit of thankſgiving, as prayer is the true exerciſe and ſupport of the ſpirit of devotion. And you may as well think, that you can be devout as you ought, without the uſe of prayer, as that you can rejoyce in God as you ought, without the practice of ſinging Pſalms. Becauſe this ſinging is as much the *natural language* of praiſe and thankſgiving as prayer is the natural language of devotion.

The union of ſoul and body is not a mixture of their ſubſtances, as we ſee bodies united and mix'd together, but conſiſts ſolely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

If two perſons were in ſuch a ſtate of dependance upon one another, that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or ſuffer, or deſire any thing, without putting the

the other into the ſame condition, one might properly ſay, that they were in a ſtate of ſtrict union, although their ſubſtances were not united together.

Now this is the union of the ſoul and body; the ſubſtance of the one cannot be mix'd, or united with the other; but they are held together in ſuch a ſtate of union, that all the actions and ſufferings of the one, are at the ſame time the actions and ſufferings of the other. The ſoul has no thought or paſſion, but the body is concern'd in it; the body has no action or motion, but what in ſome degree affects the ſoul.

Now as it is the ſole will of God, that is the *reaſon* and *cauſe* of all the powers and effects which you ſee in the world; as the *Sun* gives light and heat, not becauſe it has any natural power of ſo doing; as it is fix'd in a certain place, and other bodies moving about it, not becauſe it is in the nature of the Sun to ſtand ſtill, and in the nature of other bodies to move about it; but merely becauſe it is the *will* of God, that they ſhould be in ſuch a ſtate. As the *eye* is the organ, or inſtrument of ſeeing, not becauſe the *ſkins*, and *coats*, and *humours* of the eye, have a natural power of giving ſight: As the ears are the organs, or inſtruments of hearing; not becauſe the *make* of the ear has any natural power over ſounds, but merely becauſe it is the will of God, that *ſeeing* and *hearing* ſhould be thus receiv'd: So in like manner it

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is the ſole will of God, and not the nature of a human ſoul or body, that is the cauſe of this union betwixt the ſoul and the body.

Now if you rightly apprehend this ſhort account of the union of the ſoul and body, you will ſee a great deal into the reaſon and neceſſity of all the outward parts of Religion.

This union of our ſouls and bodies, is the reaſon both why we have ſo little and ſo much power over our ſelves. It is owing to this union, that we have ſo little power over our ſouls; for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies, as we cannot command outward cauſes, ſo we cannot always command the inward ſtate of our minds; becauſe, as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, ſo our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union of the ſoul and the body: And thus you ſee it is owing to this union, that we have ſo *little* power over our ſelves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union, that we have ſo *much* power over our ſelves. For as our ſouls in a great meaſure depend upon our bodies; and as we have great power over our bodies, as we can command our outward actions, and oblige our ſelves to ſuch habits of life, as naturally produce habits in the ſoul; as we can mortify our bodies, and remove our ſelves, from objects that

inflame our passions; so we have a great power over the *inward* state of our souls. Again, as we are masters of our outward actions; as we can force our selves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like; and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul, as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union, that we have so much power over our selves.

Now from this you may also see the necessity and benefit of singing Psalms, and of all the outward acts of Religion? for if the body has so much power over the soul, it is certain that all such bodily actions as affect the soul, are of great weight in Religion. Not as if there was any true worship, or piety in the actions themselves, but because they are proper to raise and support that *spirit*, which is the true worship of God.

Though therefore the seat of Religion is in the heart, yet since our bodies have a power over our hearts, since outward actions both proceed from, and enter into the heart, it is plain, that outward actions have a great power over that Religion which is seated in the heart.

We are therefore as well to use outward helps, as inward meditation, in order to beget and fix habits of piety in our hearts.

This

This doctrine may eaſily be carry'd too far; for by calling in too many outward means of worſhip, it may degenerate into ſuperſtition: as on the other hand, ſome have fallen into the contrary extreme. For becauſe Religion is juſtly plac'd in the heart, ſome have purſued that notion ſo far, as to renounce vocal prayer, and other outward acts of worſhip, and have reſolved all Religion into a *quietiſm*, or *myſtic* intercourſes with God in ſilence.

Now theſe are two *extremes* equally prejudicial to true Religion; and ought not to be objected either againſt internal, or external worſhip. As you ought not to ſay, that I encourage that *quietiſm* by placing religion in the heart; ſo neither ought you to ſay, that I encourage ſuperſtition, by ſhewing the benefit of outward acts of worſhip.

For ſince we are neither *all ſoul*, nor *all body*; ſeeing none of our actions are either ſeparately of the ſoul, or ſeparately of the body; ſeeing we have no habits but ſuch as are produced by the actions both of our ſouls and bodies; it is certain, that if we would arrive at habits of devotion, or delight in God, we muſt not only meditate and exerciſe our ſouls, but we muſt practiſe and exerciſe our bodies to all ſuch outward actions, as are conformable to theſe inward tempers.

If we would truly proſtrate our ſouls before God, we muſt uſe our bodies to poſtures of lowlineſs: if we deſire true fervours of devo-

tion, we must make prayer the frequent labour of our lips. If we would banish all pride and passion from our hearts, we must force our selves to all outward actions of patience and meekness. If we would feel inward motions of joy and delight in God, we must practise all the outward acts of it, and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of *singing of Psalms*; it is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers; and therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind.

If any people were to leave off prayer, because they seldom find the motions of their hearts answering the words which they speak, you would charge them with great absurdity. You would think it very reasonable, that they should continue their prayers, and be strict in observing all times of prayer, as the most likely means of removing the dulness and indevotion of their hearts.

Now this is very much the case as to singing of Psalms; people often sing without finding any inward joy suitable to the words which they speak; therefore they are careless of it, or wholly neglect it; not considering, that they act as absurdly, as he that should neglect prayer, because his heart was not enough affected with it. For it is certain, that this singing is as much the natural means

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of raiſing motions of joy in the mind, as prayer is the natural means of raiſing devotion.

I have been the longer upon this head, becauſe of its great importance to true religion. For there is no ſtate of mind ſo holy, ſo excellent, and ſo truly perfect, as that of *thankfulneſs* to God, and conſequently nothing is of more importance in Religion, than that which exerciſes and improves this habit of mind.

A *dull*, *uneaſy*, *complaining* ſpirit, which is ſometimes the ſpirit of thoſe that ſeem careful of Religion, is yet of all tempers the moſt contrary to Religion, for it diſowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he ſufficiently diſowns God, who does not adore him as a Being of infinite goodneſs.

If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being that is all love and goodneſs to all his creatures; if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be ſaid truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith, has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that every thing happens to him for the *beſt*, cannot poſſibly complain for the want of ſomething that is *better*.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, accuſing all the accidents of life,

it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of Religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest Saint in the world? It is not he who *prays* most, or *fasts* most; it is not he who gives most *alms*, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity or justice; but it is he who is *always thankful* to God, who *wills* every thing that God *willeth*, who receives every thing as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine, and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for every thing that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not therefore now wonder, that I lay so much stress upon singing a Psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness

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to God, as is the higheſt perfection of a divine and holy life.

If any one would tell you the ſhorteſt, ſureſt way to all happineſs, and all perfection, he muſt tell you to make a *rule* to your ſelf, to *thank and praiſe God for every thing that happens to you.* For it is certain, that whatever ſeeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praiſe God for it, you turn it into a bleſſing. Could you therefore work miracles you could not do more for your ſelf, than by this *thankful ſpirit*, for it *heals* with a word ſpeaking, and turns all that it touches into happineſs.

If therefore you would be ſo true to your eternal intereſt, as to propoſe this *thankfulneſs* as the end of all your Religion; if you would but ſettle it in your mind, that this was the ſtate that you was to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have ſomething plain and viſible to walk by in all your actions, you would then eaſily ſee the effect of your virtues, and might ſafely judge of your improvement in piety. For ſo far as you renounce all ſelfiſh tempers, and motions of your own will, and ſeek for no other happineſs, but in the thankful reception of every thing that happens to you, ſo far you may be ſafely reckon'd to have advanc'd in piety.

And altho' this be the higheſt temper that you can aim at, tho' it be the nobleſt ſacrifice that the greateſt ſaint can offer unto God, yet is it not ty'd to any *time*, or *place*, or *great*

occaſion, but is always in your power, and may be the exerciſe of every day. For the *common events* of every day are ſufficient to diſcover and exerciſe this temper, and may plainly ſhew you how far you are govern'd in all your actions by this thankful ſpirit.

And for this reaſon I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thankſgiving, and that the ſpirit of murmur and diſcontent may be unable to enter into the heart, which is ſo often employ'd in ſinging the praiſes of God.

It may perhaps after all be objected, that although the great benefit, and excellent effects of this practice are very apparent, yet it ſeems not altogether ſo fit for *private* devotions; ſince it can hardly be perform'd without making our devotions, publick to other people, and ſeems alſo liable to the charge of *ſounding* a *trumpet* at our prayers.

It is therefore anſwer'd, *Firſt*, That great numbers of People have it in their power to be as private as they pleaſe: ſuch perſons therefore are excluded from this excuſe, which however it may be ſo to others, is none to them. Therefore let ſuch take the benefit of this excellent devotion.

Secondly, Numbers of people are by the *neceſſity* of their ſtate, as *ſervants*, *apprentices*, *priſoners*, and *families* in ſmall houſes, forc'd to be continualy in the preſence, or ſight of ſomebody or other.

Now

Now are such persons to neglect their prayers, because they cannot pray without being seen? Are they not rather oblig'd to be more exact in them, that others may not be witnesses of their neglect, and so corrupted by their example?

Now what is here said of devotion, may surely be said of this *chanting a Psalm*, which is only a part of devotion.

The rule is this; Don't pray that you *may be seen* of men, but if your *confinement* obliges you to be always in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to *neglect*, than of being seen to have *recourse* to prayer.

Thirdly, The short of the matter is this. Either people can use such privacy in this practice as to have no hearers, or they cannot. If they can, then this objection vanishes as to them: And if they cannot, they should consider their *confinement*, and the *necessities* of their state, as the confinement of a *prison*; and then they have an excellent *pattern* to follow, they may imitate St. *Paul* and *Silas*, who *sang praises to God in prison*, though we are expressly told, that the *prisoners heard them*. They therefore did not refrain from this kind of devotion for fear of being heard by others. If therefore any one is in the same necessity, either in *prison* or out of prison, what can he do better than to follow this example?

I cannot pass by this place of Scripture, without desiring the pious reader to observe,

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how ſtrongly we are here call'd upon to this uſe of Pſalms, and what a mighty recommendation of it, the practice of theſe two great *Saints* is.

In this their great diſtreſs, in *priſon*, in *chains*, under the ſoreneſs of *ſtripes*, in the horror of *night*, the *divineſt*, *holieſt* thing they could do, was to *ſing praiſes unto God*.

And ſhall we after this, need any exhortation to this holy practice? Shall we let the *day* paſs without ſuch thankſgivings, as they would not neglect in the *night*? Shall a *priſon*, *chains*, and *darkneſs* furniſh them with ſongs of praiſe, and ſhall we have no ſingings in our *cloſets*?

Farther let it alſo be obſerv'd, that while theſe two holy men were thus employ'd in the moſt exalted part of devotion, doing that on *earth*, which *Angels* do in *Heaven*, that *the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken, all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were looſed*.

Acts xvi. 26.

And ſhall we now aſk for motives to this divine excerciſe, when inſtead of *arguments*, we have here ſuch *miracles* to convince us of its mighty power with God?

Could God by a voice from Heaven more expreſly call us to theſe ſongs of praiſe, than by thus ſhewing us, how he *hears*, *delivers*, and *rewards* thoſe that uſe them?

But this by the way. I now return to the objection in hand; and anſwer *Fourthly*, That the *privacy* of our prayers is not deſtroy'd by our *having*, but by our *ſeeking* witneſſes of them.

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If therefore no body hears you but those you cannot separate yourself from, you are as much in *secret*, and *your Father who seeth in secret*, will as truly reward your secrecy, as if you was seen by him alone.

Fifthly, *Private* prayer, as it is oppos'd to prayer in *public*, does not suppose, that no one is to have any witness of it. For *husbands* and *wives*, *brothers* and *sisters*, *parents* and *children*, *masters* and *servants*, *tutors* and *pupils*, are to be witnesses to one another of such devotion, as may truly and properly be call'd private. It is far from being a duty to conceal such devotion from such near relations.

In all these cases therefore, where such relations sometimes pray together in private, and sometimes apart by themselves, the chanting of a Psalm can have nothing objected against it.

Our blessed Lord commands us, when we *fast*, to *anoint our heads*, and *wash our faces, that we appear not unto men to fast, but unto our Father which is in secret.*

But this only means, that we must not make *public ostentation* to the *world* of our *fasting.*

For if no one was to fast in *private*, or could be said to fast in private, but he that had no witnesses of it, no one could keep a private fast, but he that liv'd by himself: For every family must know who fasts in it. Therefore the *privacy* of fasting does not suppose such a privacy as excludes *every body* from knowing it,

t, but ſuch a privacy as does not ſeek to be known abroad.

Cornelius the devout Centurion, of whom the Scripture ſaith, that he *gave, much*, and *prayed to God alway*, ſaith unto St. *Peter*, *four days ago, I was faſting until this hour.*

Acts x. 2.

Now that this faſting was ſufficiently *private* and acceptable to God, appears from the viſion of an *Angel*, with which the holy man was bleſs'd at that time.

But that it was not ſo private, as to be entirely unknown to others, appears, as from the relation of it here, ſo from what is ſaid in another place, that he *call'd two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier of them that waited upon him continually.* So that *Cornelius* his faſting was ſo far from being unknown to his family, that the ſoldiers and they of his houſhold were made devout themſelves, by *continually waiting* upon him, that is, by ſeeing and partaking of his good works.

Ver. 7.

As therefore the *privacy* or *excellency* of faſting is not deſtroy'd by being known to ſome particular perſons, neither would the *privacy* or *excellency* of your devotions be hurt, though by *chanting* a Pſalm, you ſhould be heard by ſome of your family.

The whole of the matter is this. *Great part* of the world can be as private as they pleaſe, therefore let them uſe this excellent devotion between God and themſelves.

Another

Another *great part* of the world must and ought to have witnesses of several of their devotions; let them therefore not neglect the use of a *Psalm* at *such times* as it ought to be known to those with whom they live, that they do not neglect their prayers. For surely there can be no harm in being known to be *singing* a Psalm, at *such times* as it *ought* to be known that you are at your *prayers*.

And if at other times, you desire to be in such secrecy at your devotions, as to have no body suspect it, and for that reason forbear your *psalm*; I have nothing to object against it: Provided, that at the known *hours* of prayer, you never omit this practice.

For who would not be often doing that in the *day*, which St. *Paul* and *Silas* would not neglect in the middle of the night? And if when you are thus singing, it should come into your head, how the *prison shak'd*, and the *doors open'd*, when St *Paul* sang, it would do your devotion no harm.

Lastly, seeing our *imaginations* have great power over our hearts, and can mightily affect us with their *representations*, it would be of great use to you, if at the beginning of your devotions, you was to *imagine* to your self some such representations, as might heat and warm your heart into a temper suitable to those prayers that you are then about to offer unto God.

As thus; before you begin your *psalm* of praise and rejoycing in God, make this use of your *imagination*. Be

Be ſtill, and *imagine* to yourſelf, that you ſaw the heavens open, and the glorious Choirs of Cherubims and Seraphims about the throne of God. *Imagine* that you hear the muſick of thoſe Angelic voices that ceaſe not day and night to ſing the glories of him that *is*, and *was*, and *is to come*.

Help your imagination with ſuch paſſages of Scripture as theſe. *Revel.* vii. 9. *I beheld, and lo in heaven a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtanding before the throne, and before the lamb, cloath'd with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb.*

And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God, ſaying, Amen: Bleſſing and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour and power, and ſtrength, be unto God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Think upon this till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has plac'd you amongſt thoſe heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal muſick.

If you will but uſe yourſelf to this method, and let your imagination dwell upon ſuch repreſentations as theſe, you will ſoon find it to be an excellent means of raiſing the ſpirit of devotion within you.

Always therefore begin your *Pſalm*, or Song of praiſe, with theſe *imaginations*; and at every

every verſe of it, imagine yourſelf amongſt thoſe heavenly companions, that your voice is added to theirs, and that *Angels* join with you, and you with them; and that you with a poor and low voice are ſinging that on earth, which they are ſinging in heaven.

Again, Sometimes *imagine* that you had been one of thoſe that joined with our bleſſed Saviour when he *ſung an Hymn*. Strive to imagine to yourſelf, with what *majeſty* he look'd; fancy that you had ſtood *cloſe* by him ſurrounded with his *glory*. Think how your heart would have been *inflamed*, what *ecſtaſies* of joy you would have then felt, when *ſinging* with the Son of God. Think again and again, with what joy and devotion you would then have ſung, had this been really your happy ſtate, and what a puniſhment you ſhould have thought it, to have been then ſilent; and let this teach you how to be affected with *Pſalms* and *Hymns* of thankſgiving.

Again, Sometimes imagine to your ſelf, that you ſaw holy *David* with his *hands* upon his *harp*, and his *eyes* fix'd upon *heaven*, calling in tranſport upon all the Creation, *Sun* and *Moon*, *light* and *darkneſs*, *day* and *night*, *men* and *angels*, to join with his rapturous ſoul in praiſing the Lord of Heaven.

Dwell upon this imagination, till you think you are ſinging with this divine muſician, and let ſuch a companion teach you to exalt your heart unto God in the following Pſalm; which you may uſe conſtantly firſt in the morning.

Pſalm

Pſalm cxlv. *I will magnify thee, O God my king: and I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever* &c.

Theſe following Pſalms, as the 34th, 96th, 103d, 111th, 146th, 147th, are ſuch as wonderfully ſet forth the glory of God; and therefore you may keep to any one of them at any particular hour, as you like: Or you may take the fineſt parts of any Pſalms, and ſo adding them together, may make them fitter for your own devotion.

CHAP. XVI.

Recommending devotions at nine o'clock in the morning, called in Scripture the third hour *of the day. The ſubject of theſe prayers is humility.*

I Am now come to another hour of prayer, which in Scripture is called the *third hour* of the day; but according to our way of numbering the hours, it is called the ninth hour of the morning.

The devout Chriſtian muſt at this time look upon himſelf as called upon by God to renew his acts of prayer, and addreſs himſelf again to the throne of grace

There is indeed no expreſs command in Scripture to repeat our devotions at this hour. But then it is to be conſider'd alſo, that neither is there any expreſs command to begin and end the day with prayer. So that if that be looked upon as a reaſon for neglecting devotion

votion at this hour, it may as well be urged as a reason, for neglecting devotion both at the beginning and end of the day.

But if the practice of the saints in all ages of the world, if the customs of the pious *Jews* and primitive Christians be of any force with us, we have authority enough to persuade us, to make this hour a constant season of devotion.

The Scriptures shew us how this hour was consecrated to devotion both by *Jews* and Christians; so that if we desire to number our selves amongst those whose hearts were devoted unto God, we must not let this hour pass, without presenting us to him in some solemnities of devotion. And besides this authority for this practice, the reasonableness of it is sufficient to invite us to the observance of it.

For if you was up at a good time in the morning, your first devotions will have been at a *proper* distance from this hour; you will have been long enough at other business, to make it proper for you to return to this greatest of all businesses, the raising your soul and affections unto God.

But if you have risen so *late*, as to be hardly able to begin your first devotions at this *hour*, which is proper for your *second;* you may thence learn, that the indulging yourself in the morning sleep is no *small* matter; since it sets you so far *back* in your devotions, and

robs you of those graces and blessings, which are obtained by frequent prayers.

For if prayer has *power* with God, if it *looses* the bands of sin, if it *purifies* the soul, *reforms* our hearts, and draws down the *aids* of divine grace; how can that be reckon'd a small matter, which robs us of an hour of prayer?

Imagine yourself some where placed in the air, as a spectator of all that passes in the world; and that you saw in one view, the devotions which all Christian people offer unto God every day. Imagine, that you saw some piously dividing the *day* and *night*, as the primitive Christians did, and constant at all hours of devotion, *singing* Psalms, and *calling* upon God, at all those times, that *Saints* and *Martyrs* received their gifts and graces from God.

Imagine that you saw others living without any rules, as to *times* and *frequency* of prayer, and only at their devotions sooner or later, as *sleep* and *laziness* happens to permit them.

Now if you was to see this, as God sees it, how do you suppose you should be affected with this sight? What judgment do you imagine, you should pass upon these different sorts of people? Could you think, that those who were thus *exact* in their rules of devotion, got nothing by their *exactness?* Could you think, that their prayers were received just in the same manner, and procured them no more

blessings,

bleſſings, than theirs do, who prefer lazineſs and indulgence to *times* and *rules* of devotion?

Could you take the one to be as true ſervants of God, as the other? Could you imagine, that thoſe who were thus different in their *lives*, would find no difference in their ſtates after *death*? Could you think it a matter of *indifferency*, to which of theſe people you were *moſt* like?

If not, let it be now your care to join your ſelf to that number of devout people, to that ſociety of ſaints, amongſt whom you deſire to be found, when you leave the world.

And altho' the bare *number* and *repetition* of our prayers is of little value, yet ſince prayer rightly and attentively performed, is the moſt *natural means* of amending and purifying our hearts; ſince *importunity* and *frequency* in prayer is as much preſs'd upon us by Scripture, as prayer itſelf; we may be ſure, that when we are frequent and importunate in our prayers, we are taking the *beſt means* of obtaining the higheſt benefits of a devout life.

And on the other hand, they who through negligence, lazineſs, or any other indulgence, render themſelves either unable, or uninclin'd to obſerve *rules* and *hours* of devotion, we may be ſure, that they deprive themſelves of thoſe graces and bleſſings, which an *exact* and *fervent* devotion procures from God.

Now as this frequency of prayer is founded in the doctrines of Scripture, and recommend-

ed to us by the practice of the true worſhippers of God; ſo we ought not to think ourſelves excuſed from it, but where we can ſhew, that we are ſpending our time in ſuch buſineſs, as is more acceptable to God, than theſe returns of prayer.

Leaſt of all muſt we imagine, that *dulneſs*, *negligence*, *indulgence*, or *diverſions*, can be any pardonable excuſes, for our not obſerving an exact and frequent method of devotion.

If you are of a devout ſpirit, you will rejoice at theſe returns of prayer, which keep your ſoul in an holy enjoyment of God; which change your paſſions into divine love, and fill your heart with ſtronger joys and conſolations, that you can poſſibly meet with in any thing elſe.

And if you are not of a devout ſpirit, then you are moreover obliged to this frequency of prayer, to train and exerciſe your heart into a true ſenſe and feeling of devotion.

Now ſeeing the holy ſpirit of the Chriſtian Religion, and the example of the ſaints of all ages, calls upon you thus to divide the day into hours of prayer; ſo it will be highly beneficial to you, to make a right choice of thoſe matters, which are to be the ſubject of your prayers and to keep *every* hour of prayer appropriated to ſome *particular* ſubject, which you may alter or enlarge, according as the ſtate you are in requires.

By this means you will have an opportunity of being *large* and *particular* in all the

parts

parts of any virtue or grace, which you then make the ſubject of your prayers. And by aſking for it in *all* its parts, and making it the ſubſtance of a *whole* prayer once every day, you will ſoon find a mighty change in your heart; and that you cannot thus conſtantly pray for all the parts of any virtue every day of your life, and yet live the reſt of the day contrary to it.

If a *worldly-minded* man was to pray every day againſt all the *inſtances* of a worldly temper: If he ſhould make a large *deſcription* of the temptations of covetouſneſs, and deſire God to aſſiſt him to reject them all, and to diſappoint him in all his covetous deſigns, he would find his conſcience ſo much *awaken'd*, that he would be forced either to forſake ſuch prayers, or to forſake a worldly life.

The ſame will hold true in any other inſtance. And if *we aſk, and have not*, 'tis *becauſe we aſk amiſs*. Becauſe we aſk in *cold* and *general* forms, ſuch as only *name* the virtues, without deſcribing their *particular parts*, ſuch as are not enough particular to our *condition*, and therefore make no change in our hearts. Whereas when a man enumerates all the parts of any virtue in his prayers, his conſcience is thereby awaken'd, and he is frighted at ſeeing how far ſhort he is of it. And this ſtirs him up to an ardor in devotion, when he ſees how much he wants of that virtue which he is praying for.

I have in the laſt chapter laid before you the excellency of *praiſe* and *thankſgiving*, and recommended that as the ſubject of your firſt devotions in the morning.

And becauſe an *humble ſtate* of ſoul is the very ſtate of Religion, becauſe humility is the *life* and *ſoul* of piety, the *foundation* and *ſupport* of every virtue and good work, the beſt *guard* and *ſecurity* of all holy affections; I ſhall recommend humility to you, as highly proper to be made the conſtant ſubject of your devotions, at this *third hour* of the day; earneſtly deſiring you to think no day *ſafe*, or *likely* to end well, in which you have not thus *early* put yourſelf in this poſture of humility, and called upon God to carry you through the day in the exerciſe of a *meek* and *lowly* ſpirit.

This virtue is ſo eſſential to the *right ſtate* of our ſouls, that there is no pretending to a *reaſonable* or *pious* life without it. We may as well think to ſee without *eyes*, or live without *breath*, as to live in the ſpirit of religion, without the ſpirit of *humility*.

And altho' it is thus the *ſoul* and *eſſence* of all religious duties, yet is it generally ſpeaking, the leaſt *underſtood*, the leaſt *regarded*, the leaſt *intended*, the leaſt *deſired* and *ſought* after, of all other virtues, amongſt all ſorts of Chriſtians.

No people have more occaſion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than thoſe who have made *ſome advances* in a pious life. For

pride

pride can grow as well upon our *virtues* as our *vices*, and steals upon us on all occasions.

Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride, and exposes us to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction.

It is not only the beauty of our persons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the distinctions of life; but even our *devotions* and *alms*, our *fastings* and *humiliations*, expose us to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit.

And it is for this reason, that I so earnestly advise every *devout* person to begin every day in this exercise of humility, that he may go on in *safety* under the protection of this good guide, and not fall a sacrifice to his own progress in those virtues, which are to save mankind from destruction.

Humility does not consist in having a *worse* opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves *lower* than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in *truth*, so humility is founded in a *true* and *just* sense of our *weakness*, *misery*, and *sin*. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.

The *weakness* of our state appears from our inability to do any thing, as of ourselves. In our natural state we are entirely without *any power*; we are indeed active beings, but can only act by a power, that is every *moment* lent us from God.

We have no more power of our own to move a *hand*, or ſtir a *foot*, than to move the *ſun*, or ſtop the *clouds*.

When we *ſpeak* a word, we feel no more power in our ſelves to do it, than we feel our ſelves able to raiſe the *dead*. For we act no more within our *own power*, or by our own ſtrength, when we *ſpeak* a word, or make a *ſound*, than the *Apoſtles* acted within their own power, or by their own ſtrength, when a *word* from their mouth caſt out *devils*, and cured *diſeaſes*.

As it was ſolely the power of God that enabled them to ſpeak to *ſuch purpoſes*, ſo it is ſolely the power of God that enables us to ſpeak *at all*.

We indeed find that we can *ſpeak*, as we find that we are *alive*; but the actual exerciſe of ſpeaking is no more in our own power, than the actual enjoyment of life.

This is the dependent, helpleſs poverty of our ſtate; which is a great reaſon for humility. For ſince we neither are, nor can do any thing of our ſelves, to be proud of any thing that we are, or of any thing that we can do, and to aſcribe glory to ourſelves for theſe things, as our own ornaments, has the guilt both of *ſtealing* and *lying*. It has the guilt of ſtealing, as it gives to ourſelves thoſe things which only belong to God. It has the guilt of lying, as it is the denying the truth of our ſtate, and pretending to be ſomething that we are not.

Second-

Secondly, Another argument for humility, is founded in the *misery* of our condition.

Now the misery of our condition appears in this, that we use these *borrow'd* powers of our nature, to the *torment* and *vexation* of our selves, and our fellow creatures.

God Almighty has entrusted us with the use of reason, and we use it to the disorder and corruption of our nature. We reason ourselves into all kinds of folly and misery, and make our lives the sport of foolish and extravagant passions: Seeking after imaginary happiness in all kinds of shapes, creating to ourselves a thousand wants, amusing our hearts with false hopes and fears, using the world worse than irrational animals, envying, vexing and tormenting one another with restless passions, and unreasonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life, and see what use he has made of his reason, how little has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish *passions*, what vain *thoughts*, what needless *labours*, what extravagant *projects*, have taken up the greatest part of his life. How foolish he is been in his *words* and *conversation*; how seldom he has done well with *judgment*, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by *accident*; how seldom he has been able to *please* himself, and how often he has *displeased* others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he lov'd, and lov'd what he hated; how

often

often he has been enrag'd and tranſported at *trifles*, pleas'd and diſpleas'd with the very *ſame things*, and conſtantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will ſee reaſon enough to confeſs, that *pride was not made for man.*

Let him but conſider, that if the world knew all that of him, which he knows of himſelf; if they ſaw what *vanity* and *paſſions* govern his inſide, and what ſecret *tempers* ſully and corrupt his beſt actions, he would have no more pretence to be honour'd and admir'd for his *goodneſs* and *wiſdom*, than a *rotten* and *diſtempered* body to be lov'd and admir'd for its *beauty* and *comelineſs*.

This is ſo true, and ſo known to the hearts of almoſt all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them, than to have their hearts thus fully diſcovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world, who would not rather chuſe to die, than to have all their *ſecret* follies, the *errors* of their judgments, the *vanity* of their minds, the *falſeneſs* of their pretences, the frequency of their *vain* and diſorderly *paſſions*, their *uneaſineſs*, *hatreds*, *envies*, and *vexations*, made known unto the world.

And ſhall pride be entertained in a heart thus *conſcious* of its own *miſerable behaviour?*

Shall a creature in ſuch a condition, that he could not ſupport himſelf under the *ſhame* of

of being known to the world in his *real ſtate*; ſhall ſuch a creature, becauſe his ſhame is only known to God, to holy Angels, and his own conſcience; ſhall he, in the ſight of God and holy angels, dare to be *vain* and *proud* of himſelf?

Thirdly, If to this we add the *ſhame* and *guilt* of ſin, we ſhall find a ſtill greater reaſon for humility.

No creature that had liv'd in innocence, would have thereby got any pretence for *ſelf-honour* and *eſteem*; becauſe as a creature, all that it *is*, or *has*, or *does*, is from God, and therefore the honour of all that belongs to it, is only due to God.

But if a creature that is a *ſinner* and under the *diſpleaſure* of the great governor of all the world, and deſerving nothing from him, but pains and puniſhments for the *ſhameful* abuſe of his powers; if ſuch a creature pretends to ſelf-glory for any thing that he is, or does, he can only be ſaid to glory in his ſhame.

Now how *monſtrous* and *ſhameful* the nature of ſin is, is ſufficiently apparent from that *great atonement* that is neceſſary to cleanſe us from the guilt of it.

Nothing leſs has been requir'd to take away the guilt of our ſins, than the ſufferings and death of the Son of God. Had he not taken our nature upon him, our nature had been for

for ever ſeparated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before him.

And is there any room for *pride*, or *ſelf-glory*, whilſt we are partakers of *ſuch a nature* as this?

Have our ſins render'd us ſo abominable and odious to him that made us, that he could not ſo much as *receive* our prayers, or *admit* our repentance, 'till the Son of God made himſelf man, and became a ſuffering advocate for our whole race; and can we in *this ſtate* pretend to high thoughts of our ſelves? Shall we preſume to take delight in our *own worth*, who are not worthy ſo much as to *aſk pardon* for our ſins, without the mediation and interceſſion of the Son of God?

Thus deep is the foundation of humility laid, in theſe deplorable circumſtances of our condition; which ſhew, that it is as great an offence againſt truth, and the reaſon of things, for a man in this ſtate of things, to lay claim to any degrees of glory, as to pretend to the honour of creating himſelf. If man will boaſt of any thing as his own, he muſt boaſt of his *miſery* and *ſin*; for there is nothing elſe but this, that is his own property.

Turn your eyes towards heaven, and fancy that you ſaw what is doing there; that you ſaw *cherubims* and *ſeraphims*, and all the glorious *inhabitants* of that place, all united in one work; not ſeeking *glory* from one another, not labouring their own *advancement*, not contemplating their own *perfections*, not ſinging

their

their own *praiſes*, not valuing *themſelves*, and deſpiſing *others*, but all employ'd in one and the ſame work, all happy in one and the ſame joy; *caſting down their crowns before the throne of God, giving glory, and honour, and power to him alone.* Rev. iv. 10 11.

Then turn your eyes to the *fallen world*, and conſider how unreaſonable and odious it muſt be, for ſuch poor *worms*, ſuch miſerable *ſinners*, to take delight in their own *fancy'd glories*, whilſt the higheſt and moſt glorious ſons of heaven, ſeek for no other greatneſs and honour, but that of aſcribing all honour and greatneſs, and glory to God alone?

Pride is only the diſorder of the *fallen world*, it has no place amongſt other beings; it can only ſubſiſt where *ignorance* and *ſenſuality*, *lies* and *falſhood*, *luſts* and *impurity* reign.

Let a man, when he is moſt delighted with his own *figure*, look upon a *crucifix*, and contemplate our bleſſed Lord *ſtretch'd* out, and *nail'd* upon a *Croſs*; and then let him conſider, how abſurd it muſt be, for a heart full of *pride* and *vanity*, to pray to God, through the ſufferings of ſuch a *meek* and *crucify'd* Saviour?

Theſe are the reflections that you are often to meditate upon, that you may thereby be diſpos'd to walk before God and man in ſuch a ſpirit of humility, as becomes the *weak*, *miſe-*

miſerable, *ſinful* ſtate of all that are deſcended from fallen *Adam*.

When you have by ſuch general reflections as theſe, convinc'd your mind of the reaſonableneſs of humility, you muſt not content your ſelf with this, as if you was therefore humble, becauſe your mind acknowledges the reaſonableneſs of humility, and declares againſt pride. But you muſt immediately enter your ſelf into the practice of this virtue, like a *young beginner*, that has all of it to learn, that can learn but little at a time, and with great difficulty. You muſt conſider, that you have not only this virtue to learn, but that you muſt be content to proceed as a learner in it all your time, endeavouring after greater degrees of it, and practiſing every day *acts* of humility, as you every day practice acts of devotion.

You would not imagine your ſelf to be devout, becauſe in your judgment you approv'd of prayers; and often declar'd your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themſelves humble enough, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations againſt pride?

Cæcus is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts. He is fond of *dreſs*, curious in the *ſmalleſt* matters that can add any *ornament* to his perſon. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of every thing that he ſays, or does, and never ima-

imagines it poſſible for ſuch a judgment as his to be miſtaken. He can bear no contradiction, and diſcovers the weakneſs of your underſtanding, as ſoon as ever you oppoſe him. He changes every thing in his *houſe*, his *habit*, and his *equipage*, as often as any thing more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was ſo.

There is nothing ſo odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is ſo very quick-ſighted, that he diſcovers in almoſt every body, ſome *ſtrokes* of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceeding fond of humble and modeſt perſons. Humility, ſays he, is ſo amiable a quality, that it forces our eſteem where-ever we meet with it. There is no poſſibility of deſpiſing the *meaneſt* perſon that has it, or of eſteeming the *greateſt* man that wants it.

Cæcus no more ſuſpects himſelf to be proud than he ſuſpects his want of ſenſe. And the reaſon of it is, becauſe he always finds himſelf ſo in love with humility, and ſo enrag'd at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus* you ſpeak *ſincerely* when you ſay you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no *hypocrite*, you ſpeak the *true* ſentiments of your mind; but then take this along with you, *Cæcus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in *other people*. You never once in your life thought of any other

other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have ſeen in *other people*.

The caſe of *Cæcus* is a common caſe; many people live in all the inſtances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never ſuſpect themſelves to be govern'd by pride and vanity, becauſe they know how much they diſlike proud people, and how mightily they are pleas'd with humility and modeſty, where-ever they find them.

All their ſpeeches in favour of humility, and all their railings againſt pride, are look'd upon as ſo many true exerciſes, and effects of their own humble ſpirit.

Whereas in truth, theſe are ſo far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride any one is himſelf, the more impatient will he be at the ſmalleſt inſtances of it in other people. And the leſs humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.

You muſt therefore act by a quite contrary meaſure, and reckon your ſelf only ſo far humble, as you impoſe *every inſtance* of humility upon your ſelf, and *never* call for it in other people. So far an enemy to pride, as you never *ſpare* it in your ſelf, nor ever *cenſure* it in other perſons.

Now

Now in order to do this, you need only consider, that pride and humility signify nothing to you, but so far as they are your own; that they do you neither good nor harm, but as they are the tempers of your own heart.

The loving therefore of humility is of no benefit or advantage to you, but so far as you love to see all you own thoughts, words, and actions govern'd by it. And the hating of pride does you no good, is no perfection in you, but so far as you hate to harbour any degree of it in your own heart.

Now in order to begin, and set out well in the practice of humility, you must take it for granted that you are *proud*, that you have all your life been more or less infected with this unreasonable temper.

You should believe also, that it is your *greatest* weakness, that your heart is most *subject* to it, that it is so *constantly* stealing upon you, that you have reason to watch and suspect its approaches in all your actions.

For this is what most people, especially new beginners in a pious life, may with great truth think of themselves.

For there is no one vice that is more deeply rooted in our nature, or that receives such constant nourishment from almost every thing that we think or do. There being hardly any thing in the world that we *want* or *use*, or any *action* or *duty* of life, but pride finds some means or other to take hold of it. So that at what time soever we begin to offer our selves

to God, we can hardly be ſurer of any thing, than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If therefore you find it diſagreeble to your mind to entertain this opinion of your ſelf, and that you cannot put your ſelf amongſt thoſe that want to be cur'd of pride, you may be as ſure, as if an *Angel* from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to ſeek.

For you can have no greater ſign of a more confirm'd pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, ſhews himſelf to be an entire ſtranger to that holy paſſion; ſo he that thinks he has humility enough, ſhews that he is not ſo much as a beginner in the practice of true humility.

CHAP. XVII.

Shewing how difficult the practice of humility is made, by the general ſpirit and temper of the world. How Chriſtianity requireth us to live contrary to the world.

EVery perſon, when he firſt applies himſelf to the exerciſe of this virtue of humility, muſt, as I ſaid before, conſider himſelf as a *learner*, that is to learn ſomething that

that is contrary to former tempers and habits of mind, and which can only be got by *daily* and *conſtant* practice.

He has not only as much to do, as he that has ſome new *art*, or *ſcience* to learn, but he has alſo a great deal to *unlearn:* He is to forget, and lay aſide his *own ſpirit*, which has been a long while fixing and forming it ſelf; he muſt forget, and depart from abundance of paſſions and opinions, which the *faſhion* and *vogue*, and ſpirit of the world, has made natural to him.

He muſt lay aſide his own ſpirit; becauſe as we are born in *ſin*, ſo in *pride*, which is as *natural* to us as ſelf-love, and continually ſprings from it. And this is one reaſon why Chriſtianity is ſo often repreſented as a *new birth*, and a *new ſpirit*.

He muſt lay aſide the opinions and paſſions which he has receiv'd from the world; becauſe the *vogue* and *faſhion* of the world, by which we have been carry'd away, as in a *torrent*, before we could paſs right judgments of the value of things, is in many reſpects contrary to *humility*; ſo that we muſt *unlearn* what the ſpirit of the world has taught us, before we can be govern'd by the ſpirit of humility.

The Devil is call'd in Scripture the prince of this world, becauſe he has great power in it, becauſe many of its rules and principles are invented by this evil ſpirit, the father of all lies and falſhood, to ſeparate us from God, and prevent our return to happineſs.

Now according to the *ſpirit* and *vogue* of this world, whoſe corrupt air we have all breath'd, there are many things that paſs for *great*, and *honourable*, and moſt *deſirable*, which yet are ſo far from being ſo, that the *true greatneſs* and honour of our nature conſiſts in the not deſiring them.

To abound in wealth, to have fine houſes, and rich cloaths, to be attended with ſplendor and equipage, to be beautiful in our perſons, to have titles of dignity, to be above our fellow-creatures, to command the bows and obeiſance of other people, to be look'd on with admiration, to overcome our enemies with power, to ſubdue all that oppoſe us, to ſet out our ſelves in as much ſplendor as we can, to live highly and magnificently, to eat and drink, and delight our ſelves in the moſt coſtly manner, theſe are the *great*, the *honourable*, the *deſirable* things, to which the *ſpirit* of the world turns the eyes of all people. And many a man is afraid of *ſtanding* ſtill and not engaging in the purſuit of theſe things, leſt the ſame world ſhould take him for a *fool*.

The hiſtory of the Goſpel, is chiefly the hiſtory of Chriſt's *conqueſt* over this *ſpirit* of the world. And the number of true Chriſtians, is only the number of thoſe who following the *Spirit* of Chriſt, have liv'd *contrary* to this ſpirit of the world.

If any man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. Again, *Whoſoever is born of God,*

God, overcometh the world. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. This is the language of whole New Testament. This is the *mark* of Christianity; you are to be *dead*, that is, dead to the *spirit* and *temper* of the world, and live a new life in the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ.

But notwithstanding the clearness and plainness of these doctrines which thus renounce the world, yet great part of Christians live and die slaves to the *customs* and *temper* of the world.

How many people swell with *pride* and *vanity*, for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admir'd in the world?

Would a man take *ten years* more drudgery in business to add *two horses* more to his coach, but that he knows, that the world most of all admires a *coach* and *six?* How fearful are many people of having their houses poorly furnish'd, or themselves meanly cloath'd, for this only reason, lest the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst *low* and *mean* people?

How often would a man have *yielded* to the haughtiness and ill nature of others, and shewn a *submissive* temper, but that he dares not pass for a such poor-spirited man in the *opinion* of the world?

Many a man would often drop a *resentment* and forgive an *affront*, but that he is afraid,

if he ſhould, the world would not forgive him?

How many would practiſe Chriſtian *temperance* and ſobriety in its utmoſt *perfection*, were it not for the cenſure which the world paſſes upon ſuch a life?

Others have frequent intentions of living up to the *rules* of Chriſtian perfection, which they are frighted from, by conſidering what the world would ſay of them.

Thus do the impreſſions which we have receiv'd from living in the world enſlave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be *eminent* in the ſight of God, and holy Angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world.

From this quarter ariſes the greateſt difficulty of humility, becauſe it cannot ſubſiſt in any mind, but ſo far as it is dead to the world, and has parted with all deſires of enjoying its greatneſs, and honours. So that in order to be truly humble, you muſt unlearn all thoſe notions which you have been all your life learning from this corrupt ſpirit of the world.

You can make no *ſtand* againſt the aſſaults of pride, the meek affections of humility can have no place in your ſoul, till you ſtop the power of the world over you, and reſolve againſt a *blind obedience* to its laws.

And when you are once advanc'd thus far, as to be able to ſtand ſtill in the torrent of worldly *faſhions* and *opinions*, and examine the

the *worth* and *value* of things which are moſt admir'd and valued in the world, you have gone a great way in the gaining of your freedom, and have laid a good foundation for the amendment of your heart.

For as great as the power of the world is, it is all built upon a *blind obedience*, and we need only open our eyes, to get quit of its power.

Aſk who you will, *learned* or *unlearned*, every one ſeems to know and confeſs, that the general temper and ſpirit of the world, is nothing elſe but *humour*, *folly*, and *extravagance*.

Who will not own, that the wiſdom of *Philoſophy*, the piety of *Religion*, was always confin'd to a ſmall number? And is not this expreſly owning and confeſſing, that the *common ſpirit* and *temper* of the world, is neither according to the wiſdom of *Philoſophy*, nor the piety of *Religion*.

The world therefore ſeems enough condemn'd even by it ſelf, to make it very eaſy for a thinking man to be of the ſame judgment.

And therefore I hope you will not think it a *hard ſaying*, that in order to be *humble*, you muſt withdraw your obedience from that *vulgar ſpirit* which gives laws to *Fops* and *Coquets*, and form your judgments according to the wiſdom of *Philoſophy*, and the piety of *Religion*. Who would be afraid of making ſuch a change as this?

Again, To leſſen your fear and regard to the opinion of the world, think how ſoon the world will diſregard you, and have no more thought or concern about you, than about the *pooreſt animal* that dy'd in a *ditch*.

Your friends, if they can, may bury you with ſome diſtinction, and ſet up a monument to let poſterity ſee that your *duſt* lies under ſuch a *Stone*; and when that is done all is done. You place is fill'd up by another, the world is juſt in the ſame ſtate it was, you are blotted out of its ſight, and as much forgotten by the world as if you had never belong'd to it.

Think upon the *rich*, the *great* and the *learned* perſons, that have made great figures, and been high in the eſteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are ſunk, and loſt, and gone, and as much diſregarded by the world, as if they had been only ſo many *bubbles of water*.

Think again, how many poor ſouls ſee heaven loſt, and lie now expecting a miſerable eternity, for their ſervice and homage to a world, that thinks it ſelf every whit as well without them, and is juſt as merry as it was, when they were in it.

Is it therefore worth your while to loſe the *ſmalleſt degree* of virtue, for the ſake of pleaſing ſo *bad a maſter*, and ſo *falſe a friend* as the world is?

Is it worth your while to bow the knee to ſuch an *idol* as this, that ſo ſoon will have

neither *eyes*, nor *ears*, nor a *heart* to regard you, instead of serving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his servants partakers of his own eternity?

Will you let the fear of a false world, that has no love for you, keep you from the fear of that God who has only created you, that he may love and bless you to all eternity?

Lastly, you must consider what behaviour the profession of Christianity requireth of you, with regard to the world.

Now this is plainly deliver'd in these words: *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.* Gal. i. 4. Christanity therefore implieth a deliverance from this world; and he that professeth it, professeth to live contrary to every thing and every temper, that is peculiar to this evil world.

St. *John* declareth this opposition to the world in this manner, *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God.* 1 Joh. iv. 5. This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough that no people are to be reckon'd Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. *We know*, saith the same Apostle, *That we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* C. v. *V.* 19. Christians therefore can no farther know that they are of God, than so far as they know they are not of the world; that is, that they don't

don't live according to the *ways* and *ſpirit* of the world. For all the ways, and maxims, and politicks, and tempers of the world, lie in wickedneſs. And he is only of God, or born of God in Chriſt Jeſus, who *has overcome this world*, that is, who has choſe to live by faith and govern his actions by the principles of a wiſdom revealed from God by Chriſt Jeſus.

St. *Paul* takes it for a certainty ſo well known to Chriſtians, that they are no longer to be conſider'd as living in this world, that he thus argues from it, as from an undeniable principle, concerning the aboliſhing the rites of the *Jewiſh* law: *Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances?* Here could be no argument in this, but in the Apoſtle's taking it for undeniable, that Chriſtians knew, that their profeſſion requir'd them to have done with all the tempers, and paſſions of this world, to live as citizens of the new *Jeruſalem*, and to have their converſation in heaven.

Col. ii. 20.

Our bleſſed Lord himſelf has fully determin'd this point, in theſe words: *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* This is the ſtate of Chriſtianity with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the diſtinguiſhing mark of Chriſtianity; you don't belong to Chriſt, but by being out of the world as he was out of it.

We may deceive our ſelves, if we pleaſe, with vain and ſoftning comments upon theſe words, but they are and will be underſtood in their firſt ſimplicity and plainneſs, by every one that reads them in the ſame ſpirit that our bleſſed Lord ſpoke them. And to underſtand them in any lower, leſs ſignificant meaning, is to let carnal wiſdom explain away that doctrine, by which it ſelf was to be deſtroy'd.

The Chriſtians great conqueſt over the world, is all contain'd in the myſtery of Chriſt upon the *Croſs*. It was there, and from thence, that he taught all Chriſtians how they were to come out of, and conquer the world, and what they were to do in order to be his Diſciples. And all the *doctrines*, *ſacraments*, and *inſtitutions* of the Goſpel, are only ſo many explications of the meaning, and applications of the benefit of this great myſtery.

And the ſtate of Chriſtianity implieth nothing elſe but an *entire*, *abſolute* conformity to that *ſpirit* which Chriſt ſhew'd in the myſterious ſacrifice of himſelf upon the *croſs*.

Every man therefore is only ſo far a Chriſtian as he partakes of this ſpirit of Chriſt. It was this that made St. *Paul* ſo paſſionately expreſs himſelf, *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* But why does he glory? Is it becauſe Chriſt had ſuffer'd in his ſtead, and had excus'd him from ſuffering? No, by no means. But it was becauſe his chriſtian profeſſion had call'd him to the honour

honour of ſuffering with Chriſt, and of dying to the world under reproach and contempt, as he had done upon the croſs. For he immediately adds, *by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* This you ſee was the reaſon of his glorying in the croſs of Chriſt, becauſe it had call'd him to a like ſtate of death and crucifixion to the world.

Gal. vi. 14.

Thus was the croſs of Chriſt, in St. *Paul*'s days, the glory of Chriſtians; not as it ſignified their not being aſham'd to own a Maſter that was crucified, but as it ſignified their glorying in a Religion, which was nothing elſe but a doctrine of the Croſs, that call'd them to the ſame ſuffering ſpirit, the ſame ſacrifice of themſelves, the ſame renunciation of the world, the ſame humility and meekneſs, the ſame patient bearing of injuries, reproaches, and contempts, and the ſame dying to all the greatneſs, honours and happineſs of this world, which Chriſt ſhew'd upon the Croſs.

To have a true idea of Chriſtianity, we muſt not conſider our bleſſed Lord as ſuffering in *our ſtead*, but as our *repreſentative*, acting in our *name*, and with ſuch particular merit, as to make our *joining* with him, *acceptable* unto God.

He ſuffer'd, and was a ſacrifice, to make our ſufferings and ſacrifice of our ſelves fit to be receiv'd by God. And we are to ſuffer, to be crucified, to die, and riſe with Chriſt,

or

or elſe his crucifixion, death and reſurrection will profit us nothing.

The neceſſity of this conformity to all that Chriſt did, and ſuffer'd upon our account, is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

Firſt, as to his *ſufferings*, this is the only condition of our being ſav'd by them, *if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him.*

Secondly, as to his *Crucifixion*. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him*, &c. Here you ſee Chriſt is not crucified in *our ſtead*; but unleſs our old man be really crucified with him, the croſs of Chriſt will profit us nothing. Rom. vi. 6.

Thirdly, as to the death of Chriſt, the condition is this; *If we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.* If therefore Chriſt be dead alone, if we are not dead with him, we are as ſure from this Scripture, that we ſhall not live with him.

Laſtly, as to the *reſurrection* of Chriſt, the Scripture ſheweth us how we are to partake of the benefit of it: *If ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God.* Col. iii. 1.

Thus you ſee how plainly the Scripture ſets forth our bleſſed Lord, as our *repreſentative* acting

acting and ſuffering in our name, binding and obliging us to conform to all that he did and ſuffered for us.

It was for this reaſon, that the holy Jeſus ſaid of his diſciples, and in them of all true believers, *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* Becauſe all true believers conforming to the *ſufferings*, *crucifixion*, *death*, and *reſurrection* of Chriſt, live no longer after the ſpirit and temper of this world, but their *life is hid with Chriſt in God.*

This is the ſtate of ſeparation from the world, to which all orders of Chriſtians are called. They muſt ſo far renounce all worldly tempers, be ſo far governed by the things of another life, as to ſhew, that they are truly and really *crucify'd*, *dead*, and *riſen* with Chriſt. And it is as neceſſary for all Chriſtians to conform to this *great change* of ſpirit, to be thus in Chriſt *new creatures*, as it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould *ſuffer*, *dye*, and *riſe* again for our ſalvation.

How high the Chriſtian life is placed above the ways of this world, is wonderfully deſcrib'd by St. *Paul* in theſe words: *Where-*

2 Cor. v. 16 *fore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh; yea, tho' we have known Chriſt after the fleſh; yet henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſs'd away; behold, all things are become new.*

He that feels the *force* and *ſpirit* of theſe words, can hardly bear any human interpretation

tion of them. Henceforth, says he, that is, since the death and resurrection of Christ, the state of Christianity is become so glorious a state, that we don't even consider Christ himself as in the flesh upon earth, but as a God of glory in heaven; we know and consider ourselves not as men in the flesh, but as fellow-members of a new society, that are to have all our hearts, our tempers, and conversation in heaven.

Thus it is that Christianity has placed us out of, and above the world; and we fall from our calling, as soon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the spirit of the world that nailed our blessed Lord to the *cross*; so every man that has the spirit of Christ, that opposes the world as he did, will certainly be crucify'd by the world some way or other.

For Christianity still lives in the same world that Christ did; and these two will be utter enemies, till the kingdom of darkness is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as his true disciple, you had then been hated as he was; and if you now live in his spirit, the world will be the same enemy to you now, that it was to him then.

If ye were of the world, saith our blessed Lord, *the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* John xv. 19.

We

We are apt to loſe the true meaning of theſe words, by conſidering them only as an *hiſtorical deſcription* of ſomething that was the ſtate of our Saviour and his diſciples at that time. But this is reading the Scripture as a *dead letter*; for they as exactly deſcribe the ſtate of true Chriſtians at this, and all other times, to the end of the world.

For as *true Chriſtianity* is nothing elſe but the ſpirit of Chriſt, ſo whether that ſpirit appear in the perſon of Chriſt himſelf, or his Apoſtles, or followers in any age, it is the ſame thing; whoever hath his ſpirit, will be hated, deſpiſed, and condemned by the world, as he was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own: this is as certain and unchangeable, as the contrariety betwixt *light* and *darkneſs*.

When the holy Jeſus ſaith, *If the world hate you*, he does not add by way of conſolation, that it may ſome time or other ceaſe its hatred, or that it will not always hate them; but he only gives this as a reaſon for their bearing it, *You know that it hated me before it hated you:* ſignifying, that it was he, that is, his ſpirit, that by reaſon of its contrariety to the world, was then, and always would be hated by it.

You will perhaps ſay, that the world is now become Chriſtian, at leaſt that part of it where we live; and therefore the world is not

now

now to be considered in that state of opposition to Christianity, as when it was *heathen.*

It is granted, the world now professeth Christianity. But will any one say, that this Christian world is of the spirit of Christ? Are its general tempers the tempers of Christ? Are the passions of sensuality, self-love, pride, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory, less contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, now they are amongst Christians, than when they were amongst heathens? Or will you say, that the tempers and passions of the heathen world are lost and gone?

Consider, *secondly*, what you are to mean by the world. Now this is fully described to our hands by St. *John*. *All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*; &c. This is an exact and full description of the World. Now will you say, that *this world* is become *Christian?* But if all this still subsists, then the *same world* is now in being, and the same enemy to Christianity, that was in St. *John*'s days. 1 John ii. 16.

It was this world that St. *John* condemned, as being not of the Father; whether therefore it outwardly professeth, or openly persecuteth Christianity, it is still in the same state of contrariety to the true spirit and holiness of the Gospel.

And indeed the world by professing Christianity, is so far from being a less dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its

favours deſtroyed more Chriſtians than ever it did by the moſt violent perſecution.

We muſt therefore be ſo far from conſidering the world as in a ſtate of leſs enmity and oppoſition to Chriſtianity, than it was in the firſt times of the goſpel, that we muſt guard againſt it as a greater and more dangerous enemy now, than it was in thoſe times.

It is a greater enemy, becauſe it has greater power over Chriſtians by its favours, riches, honours, rewards and protections, than it had by the fire and fury of its perſecutions.

It is a more dangerous enemy, by having loſt its appearance of enmity. Its outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity makes it no longer conſider'd as an enemy, and therefore the generality of people are eaſily perſuaded to reſign themſelves up to be govern'd and directed by it.

How many conſciences are kept at quiet, upon no other foundation, but becauſe they ſin under the authority of the chriſtian world?

How many directions of the Goſpel lye by unregarded; and how unconcernedly do particular perſons read them; for no other reaſon but becauſe they ſeem unregarded by the chriſtian world?

How many compliances do people make to the chriſtian world, without any heſitation, or remorſe; which if they had been requir'd of them only by heathens, would have been refus'd,

refus'd, as contrary to the holineſs of Chriſtianity?

Who could be content with ſeeing how contrary his life is to the *Goſpel*, but becauſe he ſees that he lives as the chriſtian world doth?

Who that reads the Goſpel, would wont to be perſuaded of the neceſſity of *great ſelf-denial*, *humility*, and *poverty of ſpirit*, but that the authority of the world has baniſh'd this doctrine of the croſs?

There is nothing therefore, that a good Chriſtian ought to be more ſuſpicious of, or more conſtantly guard againſt, than the authority of the *chriſtian world*.

And all the paſſages of Scripture, which repreſent the world as contrary to Chriſtianity, which require our ſeparation from it, as from a *mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, a monſter of iniquity, are all to be taken in the ſame *ſtrict ſenſe*, in relation to the preſent world.

For the change that the world has undergone, has only alter'd its methods, but not leſſen'd its power of deſtroying Religion.

Chriſtians had nothing to fear from the *heathen world*, but the loſs of their lives; but the world become a *friend*, makes it difficult for them to *ſave* their Religion.

Whilſt *pride*, *ſenſuality*, *covetouſneſs* and *ambition*, had only the authority of the *heathen world*, Chriſtians were thereby made more intent upon the contrary virtues. But when pride, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs and ambition,

have the authority of the Chriſtian world, then private Chriſtians are in the utmoſt danger, not only of being ſham'd out of the practice, but of loſing the very notion of the piety of the Goſpel.

There is therefore hardly any poſſibility of ſaving your ſelf from the preſent world, but by conſidering it as the ſame *wicked enemy*, to all true holineſs, as it is repreſented in the Scriptures; and by aſſuring your ſelf, that it is as dangerous to conform to its *tempers* and *paſſions*, now it is chriſtian, as when it was heathen.

For only aſk your ſelf, Is the *piety*, the *humility*, the *ſobricty* of the chriſtian world, the piety, the humility, and ſobriety of the chriſtian ſpirit? If not, how can you be more undone by any world, than by conforming to that which is chriſtian?

Need a man do more to make his ſoul unfit for the mercy of God, than by being *greedy* and *ambitious* of honour? Yet how can a man renounce this temper, without renouncing the ſpirit and temper of the world, in which you now live?

How can a man be made more incapable of the ſpirit of Chriſt, than by a *wrong value* for money; and yet how can he be more wrong in his value of it, than by following the authority of the chriſtian world?

Nay, in every *order* and *ſtation* of life, whether of *learning* or *buſineſs*, either in Church or State, you cannot act up to ſpirit

rit of Religion, without renouncing the moſt *general temper* and *behaviour* of thoſe, who are of the ſame order and buſineſs as your ſelf.

And though *human prudence* ſeems to talk mighty wiſely about the neceſſity of avoiding *particularities*, yet he that dares not be ſo *weak* as to be particular, will be often oblig'd to avoid the moſt ſubſtantial duties of chriſtian piety.

Theſe reflections will, I hope, help you to break through thoſe difficulties, and reſiſt thoſe temptations, which the authority and faſhion of the world hath rais'd againſt the practice of *chriſtian humility*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Shewing how the education *which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practis'd. The ſpirit of a better education, repreſented in the character of* Paternus.

ANother difficulty in the practice of humility, ariſes from our education. We are all of us, for the moſt part corruptly educated, and then committed to take our courſe in a corrupt world; ſo that it is no

wonder, if examples of great piety are ſo ſeldom ſeen.

Great part of the world are undone, by being born and bred in families that have no Religion; where they are made vicious and irregular, by being like thoſe with whom they firſt liv'd.

But this is not the thing I now mean; the education that I here intend, is ſuch as children generally receive from virtuous and ſober *parents*, and learned *tutors* and governors.

Had we continued perfect, as God created the firſt man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a ſufficient *ſelf-inſtruction* for every one. But as *ſickneſs* and *diſeaſes* have created the neceſſity of *medicines* and *phyſicians*, ſo the change and diſorder of our rational nature, has introduc'd the neceſſity of *education* and *tutors*.

And as the only end of the phyſician is, to reſtore nature to its own ſtate, ſo the only end of education is, to reſtore our rational nature to its proper ſtate. Education therefore is to be conſider'd as *reaſon* borrow'd at *ſecond hand*, which is, as far as it can, to ſupply the loſs of *original* perfection. And as phyſick may juſtly be call'd the *art* of reſtoring health, ſo education ſhould be conſider'd in no other light, than as the art of recovering to man the uſe of his reaſon.

Now as the inſtruction of every *art* or *ſcience* is founded upon the *diſcoveries*, the *wiſdom*, *experience* and *maxims* of the ſeveral great

great men that have laboured in it; so that *human wisdom*, or *right use* of our reason, which young people should be call'd to by their education, is nothing else but the *best experience*, and *finest reasonings* of men, that have devoted themselves to the study of wisdom, and the improvement of human nature.

All therefore that *great saints*, and *dying* men, when the fullest of light and conviction, and after the highest improvement of their reason, all that they have said of the necessity of *piety*, of the excellency of *virtue*, of their *duty* to God, of the emptiness of riches, of the vanity of the *world*; all the *sentences*, *judgments*, *reasonings*, and *maxims* of the wisest of philosophers, when in their highest state of wisdom, should constitute the *common lessons* of instruction for youthful minds.

This is the only way to make the *young* and *ignorant* part of the world the better for the *wisdom*, and *knowledge* of the wise and ancient.

An education which is not *wholly* intent upon this is as much beside the point, as an art of *Physick*, that had little or no regard to the restoration of health.

The youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Epictetus*, were thus educated. Their every day lessons and instructions were so many lectures upon the nature of man, his true *end*, and the right use of his faculties; upon the immortality of the soul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and

its agreeableneſs to the divine nature; upon the dignity of reaſon, the neceſſity of temperance, fortitude and generoſity, and the ſhame and folly of indulging our paſſions.

Now as Chriſtianity has, as it were, new created the *moral* and *religious* world, and ſet every thing that is reaſonable, wiſe, holy and deſirable, in its true point of light; ſo one would expect, that the education of youth ſhould be as much better'd and amended by Chriſtianity, as the *faith* and *doctrines* of Religion are amended by it.

As it has introduced ſuch a *new ſtate* of things, and ſo fully inform'd us of the *nature* of man, the *ends* of his creation, the ſtate of his condition; as it has fix'd all our *goods* and *evils*, taught us the means of purifying our ſouls, pleaſing God, and becoming eternally happy; one might naturally ſuppoſe, that every Chriſtian Country abounded with *ſchools* for the teaching, not only a few queſtions and anſwers of a *Catechiſm*, but for the forming, training and practiſing youths in ſuch an outward courſe of life, as the *higheſt* precepts, the *ſtricteſt* rules, and the *ſublimeſt* doctrines of Chriſtianity require.

An education under *Pythagoras*, or *Socrates*, had no other end, but to teach youth to *think*, *judge*, *act*, and follow ſuch *rules* of life, as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* us'd.

And is it not as reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a Chriſtian education ſhould have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and judge,

judge, and act, and live according to the *ſtricteſt laws* of Chriſtianity?

At leaſt one would ſuppoſe, that in all chriſtian ſchools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the *ſpirit* of Chriſtianity, in ſuch *ſeverity* of behaviour, ſuch *abſtinence*, *ſobriety*, *humility* and *devotion*, as Chriſtianity requires, ſhould not only be *more*, but an *hundred times* more regarded, than any, or all things elſe.

For our education ſhould imitate our *guardian angels*, ſuggeſt nothing to our minds but what is *wiſe* and *holy*; help us to diſcover and ſubdue every *vain paſſion* of our hearts, and every *falſe judgment* of our minds.

And it is as *ſober* and *reaſonable* to expect and require all this benefit of a chriſtian education, as to require that phyſick ſhould ſtrengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove that which is *ſickly* and *diſeas'd*.

But alas, our modern education is not of this kind.

The *firſt temper* that we try to awaken in children, is *pride*; as dangerous a paſſion as that of *luſt*. We ſtir them up to vain thoughts of themſelves, and do every thing we can, to puff up their minds with a ſenſe of their own abilities.

Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the *fire* and *vanity* of their minds, and exhort them to every thing from corrupt motives: We ſtir them up to action from principles of *ſtrife* and *ambition*, from *glory*, *envy*, and a deſire of diſtinction, that they may

may excel others, and ſhine in the eyes of the world.

We repeat and inculcate theſe motives upon them, till they think it a part of their duty to be *proud*, *envious*, and *vain-glorious* of their own accompliſhments.

And when we have taught them to ſcorn to be out done by any, to bear no *rival*, to thirſt after *every inſtance* of applauſe, to be content with nothing but the higheſt diſtinctions; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promiſe the world ſome mighty things from youths of ſuch a glorious ſpirit.

If children are intended for *holy orders*, we ſet before them ſome eminent *orator*, whoſe *fine* preaching has made him the *admiration* of the age, and carry'd him through all the *dignities* and *preferments* of the Church.

We encourage them to have theſe *honours* in their eye, and to expect the reward of their ſtudies from them.

If the youth is intended for a *trade*; we bid him look at all the rich men of the *ſame trade*, and conſider how many now are carry'd about in their *ſtately coaches*, who began in the ſame low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a *right turn*, by often telling him how very rich ſuch and ſuch a tradeſman dy'd.

If he is to be a *lawyer*, then we ſet great *Counſellors*, Lords *Judges*, and *Chancellors*, before his eyes. We tell him what great *fees*, and great *applauſe* attend fine pleading. We exhort

exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the *long Robe*..

That this is the nature of our *best education*, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

And after all this, we complain of the effects of pride; we wonder to see *grown men* acted and govern'd by *ambition*, *envy*, *scorn*, and a *desire*, of glory; not considering that they were all the time of their youth call'd upon to all their action and industry upon the same principles.

You teach a child to *scorn* to be outdone, to thirst for *distinction* and *applause*; and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner?

Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian, as to govern his heart by the *doctrines* of humility, I would fain know at *what time* he is to begin it; or if he is *ever* to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it?

How *dry* and *poor* must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth, that has been spurr'd up to all his industry by *ambition*, *envy*, *emulation*, and a desire of *glory* and *distinction?* And if he is not to act by these *principles* when he is a *man*, why do we call him to act by them in his *youth?*

Envy is acknowledg'd by all people to be the moſt *ungenerous*, *baſe* and *wicked* paſſion, that can enter into the heart of man.

And is this a temper to be inſtil'd, nouriſh'd and eſtabliſh'd in the minds of young people?

I know it is ſaid, that it is not *envy*, but *emulation*, that is intended to be awaken'd in the minds of young men.

But this is vainly ſaid. For when children are taught to bear no *rival*, and to *ſcorn* to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be *envious*. For it is impoſſible for any one to have this *ſcorn* of being out done, and this contention with *rivals*, without burning with *envy* againſt all thoſe that ſeem to excel him, or get any diſtinction from him. So that what children are taught is *rank envy*, and only cover'd with a name of a leſs odious ſound.

Secondly, If *envy* is thus confeſſedly bad, and it be only *emulation* that is endeavour'd to be awaken'd in children, ſurely there ought to be *great care* taken, that children may know the one from the other. That they may abominate the one as a great *crime*, whilſt they give the other admiſſion into their minds.

But if this were to be attempted, the *fineneſs* of the diſtinction betwixt envy and emulation, would ſhew that it was eaſier to divide them in words, than to ſeparate them in action.

For

For *emulation*, when it is defin'd in its beſt manner, is nothing elſe but a *refinement* upon envy, or rather the moſt *plauſible part* of that black and venomous paſſion.

And though it is eaſy to ſeparate them in the *notion*, yet the moſt acute *Philoſopher*, that underſtands the art of diſtinguiſhing ever ſo well, if he gives himſelf up to *emulation*, will certainly find himſelf *deep* in *envy*.

For *envy* is not an *original* temper, but the natural, neceſſary, and unvoidable effect of emulation, or a deſire of glory.

So that he who eſtabliſhes the one in the minds of people, neceſſarily fixes the other there. And there is no other poſſible way of deſtroying envy, but by deſtroying emulation, or a deſire of glory. For the one always riſes and falls in proportion to the other.

I know it is ſaid in defence of this method of education, that ambition, and a deſire of glory, are neceſſary to excite young people to induſtry; and that if we were to preſs upon them the doctrines of humility, we ſhould deject their minds, and ſink them into *dulneſs* and *idleneſs*.

But theſe people who ſay this, don't conſider, that this reaſon, if it has any ſtrength is full as ſtrong againſt preſſing the doctrines of humility upon *grown men*, leſt we ſhould deject their minds, and ſink them into dulneſs and idleneſs.

For who does not ſee, that *middle-aged men* want as much the aſſiſtance of pride, ambi-

tion,

tion, and vain-glory, to ſpur them up to action and induſtry, as *children* do? And it is very certain, that the precepts of humility are more contrary to the deſigns of ſuch men, and more grievous to their minds, when they are preſſed upon them, than they are to the minds of young perſons.

This reaſon therefore that is given, why children ſhould not be train'd up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reaſon why the ſame humility ſhould never be requir'd of grown men.

Thirdly, Let thoſe people, who think that children would be ſpoil'd, if they were not thus educated, conſider this.

Could they think, that if any children had been educated by our bleſſed Lord, or his holy Apoſtles, that their minds would have been ſunk into dulneſs and idleneſs?

Or could they think, that ſuch children would not have been train'd up in the profoundeſt principles of a ſtrict and true humility? Can they ſay that our bleſſed Lord, who was the meekeſt and humbleſt man that ever was on earth, was hinder'd by his humility from being the greateſt example of worthy and glorious actions, that ever were done by man?

Can they ſay that his Apoſtles, who liv'd in the humble ſpirit of their maſter, did therefore ceaſe to be laborious and active inſtruments of doing good to all the world?

A few

A few ſuch reflections as theſe, are ſufficient to expoſe all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition.

Paternus liv'd about *two hundred* years ago; he had but one ſon, whom he educated himſelf in his own houſe. As they were ſiting together in the *Garden*, when the child was *ten years* old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have ſpent wholly with me; and my love and tenderneſs to you has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cauſe of all the comfort and pleaſure that you enjoy: Your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the laſt day that I ſhould live with you.

But my child, tho' you now think your ſelf mighty happy, becauſe you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whoſe love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive ſuch bleſſings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have ſeen me daily worſhip, whom I daily call upon to bleſs both you and me, and all mankind, whoſe wondrous acts are recorded in thoſe Scriptures which you conſtantly read. That God who created the heavens and the earth, who brought a flood upon the old world, who ſav'd *Noah* in the Ark, who was the God of *Abraham*,

ham, Iſaac and *Jacob*, whom *Job* bleſſed and prais'd in the greateſt afflictions, who deliver'd the *Iſraelites* out of the hands of the *Egyptians*, who was the protector of righteous *Joſeph*, *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, and holy *Daniel*, who ſent ſo many Prophets into the world, who ſent his Son Jeſus Chriſt to redeem mankind; this God who has done all theſe great things, who has created ſo many millions of men, who liv'd and died before you was born, with whom the ſpirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of Angels now worſhip in Heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nouriſher, from whom and not from me, you receiv'd your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender *Elm* which you there ſee.

I my ſelf am not half the age of this *ſtady Oak*, under which we ſit; many of our fathers have ſat under its boughs, we have all of us call'd it ours in our turn, tho' it ſtands, and drops its *maſters*, as it drops its *leaves*.

You ſee, my ſon, this wide and large *Firmament* over our heads, where the *Sun* and *Moon*, and all the *Stars* appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of theſe bodies at this vaſt diſtance from us, you would ſtill diſcover others, as much above you, as the *Stars* that you ſee here are above the *Earth*. Were you to go up or down, *Eaſt* or *Weſt*,

Weſt, *North*, or *South*, you would find the ſame height without any *top*, and the ſame depth without any *bottom*.

And yet my child, ſo great is God, that all theſe bodies added together, are but as a *grain* of ſand in his ſight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all *worlds* and all *ſpirits*, as if he had no ſon but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the *hairs* of your head, watches over you ſleeping and waking, and has preſerv'd you from a thouſand dangers, which neither you nor I know any thing of.

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often ſeen. Your late *ſickneſs* has ſhewn you how little I could do for you in that ſtate; and the frequent pains of your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you *food* and *medicines*, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nouriſhment; it is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worſhip, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet ſee him, but every thing you ſee, are ſo many marks of his power and preſence, and he is nearer to you, than any thing that you can ſee.

Take him for your *Lord*, and *Father*, and *Friend*, look up unto him as the fountain and cauſe of all the good that you have receiv'd

through my hands, and reverence me only as the *bearer* and *miniſter* of God's good things unto you. And he that bleſſed my father before I was born, will bleſs you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happineſs out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater Family than mine, you are a young member of the family of this Almighty Father of all Nations, who has created infinite orders of Angels, and numberleſs generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the ſame ſociety in Heaven.

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, becauſe God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers recorded in Scripture did for their children, who are now in reſt and peace with God.

I ſhall in a ſhort time die, and leave you to God, and your ſelf, and if God forgiveth my ſins, I ſhall go to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and live amongſt Patriarchs and Prophets, Saints and Martyrs, where I ſhall pray for you, and hope for your ſafe arrival at the ſame place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on theſe great things, and your ſoul will ſoon grow great and noble by ſo meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave theſe *gardens*, theſe *fields* and *farms*, to contemplate upon God and Heaven, to conſider upon Angels, and

and the ſpirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been us'd to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do any thing, unleſs you firſt knew my will, ſo let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do every thing in his fear, and to abſtain from every thing that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God keepeth a *book* of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be receiv'd to the happineſs of thoſe holy men who have died before you, or be turn'd away amongſt wicked ſpirits, that are never to ſee God any more.

Never forget this book, my ſon, for it is written, it muſt be open'd you muſt ſee it, and you muſt be try'd by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the hand-writing of God may not appear againſt you.

God, my child, is all *love*, and *wiſdom*, and *goodneſs*; and every thing that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot pleaſe God, but ſo far as you ſtrive to walk in love, wiſdom and goodneſs. As all wiſdom, love and

goodneſs proceeds from God, ſo nothing but love, wiſdom and goodneſs, can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you joyn your ſelf to him; and when you love what he diſlikes, then you oppoſe him, and ſeparate your ſelf from him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

Firſt of all, my child, worſhip and adore God, think of him magnificently, ſpeak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his ſervice, and pray unto him frequently and conſtantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with ſuch tenderneſs and affection, as you love your ſelf. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preſerves them, and then ſtrive to love the world, as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy, therefore do you *will*, and deſire the ſame. All men are great inſtances of divine love, therefore let all men be inſtances of your love.

But above all, my ſon, mark this, never do any thing through ſtrife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do any thing in order to excel other people, but in order to pleaſe God, and becauſe it is his will, that you ſhould do every thing in the beſt manner that you can.

For

For if it is once a pleaſure to you to excell other people, it will by degrees be a pleaſure to you, to ſee other people not ſo good as your ſelf.

Baniſh therefore every thought of *ſelf-pride* and *ſelf-diſtinction*, and accuſtom your ſelf to rejoyce in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow creatures, and be as glad to ſee any of their good actions, as your own.

For as God is as well pleas'd with their well doings, as with yours, ſo you ought to deſire, that every thing that is wiſe, and holy, and good, may be perform'd in as high a manner by other people, as by your ſelf.

Let this therefore be your only motive and ſpur to all good actions, honeſt induſtry, and buſineſs, to do every thing in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reaſon, becauſe it is pleaſing to God, who deſires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my ſon, you will be maſter of all my eſtate, which will be a great deal more, than the neceſſities of one family require. Therefore as you are to be charitable to the ſouls of men, and wiſh them the ſame happineſs with you in heaven, ſo be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, ſo let that part of them which is fallen to your ſhare, be employ'd as God would have all employ'd, for the common good of all.

Do good, my ſon, firſt of all to thoſe that moſt deſerve it, but remember to do good to all. The greateſt ſinners receive daily inſtances of God's goodneſs towards them, he nouriſhes and preſerves them, that they may repent, and return to him; do you therefore imitate God, and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindneſs, when you ſee that he wants it.

I am teaching you *Latin* and *Greek*, not that you ſhould deſire to be a great *Critick*, a fine *Poet*, or an eloquent *Orator*; I would not have your heart feel any of theſe deſires, for the deſire of theſe accompliſhments, is a vanity of the mind, and the maſters of them are generally vain men. For the deſire of any thing that is not a real good, leſſens the application of the mind after that which is ſo.

But I teach you theſe languages, that at proper times you may look into the hiſtory of paſt ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world. That reading the writings of the antient *Sages*, you may ſee how wiſdom and virtue have been the praiſe of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by their wiſe ſayings.

Let truth and plainneſs therefore be the only ornament of your language, and ſtudy nothing but how to think of all things as they deſerve, to chuſe every thing that is beſt, to live according to reaſon and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a ſcholar, no finer a gentleman, than theſe tempers will make you. As true Religion is nothing elſe but ſimple Nature govern'd by right reaſon, ſo it loves and requires great plainneſs and ſimplicity of life. Therefore avoid all ſuperfluous ſhews of finery and equipage, and let your houſe be plainly furniſh'd with moderate conveniencies. Don't conſider what your eſtate can afford, but what right reaſon requires.

Let you *dreſs* be ſober, clean, and modeſt, not to ſet out the beauty of your perſon, but to declare the ſobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may reſemble the inward plainneſs and ſimplicity of your heart. For it is highly reaſonable, that you ſhould be *one man*, all of a piece, and appear outwardly ſuch as you are inwardly.

As to your *meat* and *drink*, in them obſerve the *higheſt rules* of Chriſtian temperance and ſobriety; conſider your body only as the ſervant and miniſter of your ſoul; and only ſo nouriſh it, as it may beſt perform an humble and obedient ſervice to it.

But, my ſon, obſerve this as a moſt principal thing, which I ſhall remember you of as long as I live with you.

Hate and deſpiſe all *human glory*, for it is nothing elſe but human folly. It is the great-

teſt *ſnare*, and the greateſt *betrayer* that you can poſſibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its inſtances, practiſe it in all its parts, for it is the nobleſt ſtate of the ſoul of man; it will ſet your heart and affections right towards God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condeſcend to all the weakneſs, and infirmities of your fellow creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoyce in their proſperities, compaſſionate their diſtreſs, receive their friendſhip, overlook their unkindneſs, forgive their malice, be a ſervant of ſervants, and condeſcend to do the loweſt offices to the loweſt of mankind.

Aſpire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do every thing in ſo reaſonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is every where preſent, and ſees and obſerves all your actions. The greateſt trial of humility is an humble behaviour towards your equals in *age*, *eſtate*, and *condition* of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards theſe people. Let all your behaviour towards them be govern'd by unfeigned love. Have no deſire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at thoſe that would put themſelves above you. If they are proud they are ill of a very bad diſtemper, let them

therefore

therefore have your tender pity, and perhaps your meekneſs may prove an occaſion of their cure. But if your humility ſhould do them no good, it will however be the greateſt good that you can do to your ſelf

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always ſtriving to exceed him, and that is your ſelf.

The time of practiſing theſe precepts, my child, will ſoon be over with you, the world will ſoon ſlip through your hands, or rather you will ſoon ſlip through it; it ſeems but the other day ſince I receiv'd theſe ſame inſtructions from my dear Father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my Father ſaid unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the ſame inſtructions.

Thus did *Paternus* educate his ſon.

Can any one now think that ſuch an education as this, would weaken and deject the minds of young people, and deprive the world of any worthy and reaſonable labours?

It is ſo far from that, that there is nothing ſo likely to enoble, and exalt the mind, and prepare it for the moſt heroical exerciſe of all virtues.

For who will ſay, that a love of God, a deſire of pleaſing him, a love of our neighbour, a love of truth, of reaſon, and virtue, a contemplation of eternity, and the rewards of piety, are not ſtronger motives to great and

good

good actions, than a little uncertain popular praiſe.

On the other hand, there is nothing in reality that more weakens the mind, and reduces it to meanneſs and ſlavery, nothing that makes it leſs maſter of its own actions, or leſs capable of following reaſon, than a love of praiſe and honour.

For as praiſe and honour are often given to *things* and *perſons*, where they are not due, as that is generally moſt prais'd and honour'd, that moſt gratifies the *humours*, *faſhions*, and vicious *tempers* of the world: ſo he that acts upon the deſire of praiſe and applauſe, muſt part with every other principle; he muſt ſay *black* is *white*, put *bitter* for *ſweet*, and *ſweet* for *bitter*, and do the meaneſt, baſeſt things, in order to be applauded.

For in a corrupt world, as this is, worthy actions are only to be ſupported by their own worth, where inſtead of being prais'd and honour'd, they are moſt often reproach'd, and perſecuted.

So that to educate children upon a motive of *emulation*, or a deſire of *glory*, in a world where glory itſelf is *falſe*, and moſt commonly given *wrong*, is to deſtroy the natural integrity and fortitude of their minds, and give them a *biaſs* which will oftner carry them to baſe and mean, than great and worthy actions.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Shewing how the method of educating daughters, *makes it difficult for them to enter into the ſpirit of Chriſtian humility. How miſerably they are injur'd and abus'd by ſuch an education. The ſpirit of a better education repreſented in the character* Euſebia.

THAT turn of mind which is taught and encourag'd in the education of *daughters*, makes it exceeding difficult for them to enter into ſuch a ſenſe and practice of humility, as the ſpirit of Chriſtianity requireth.

The right education of this *ſex* is of the utmoſt importance to human life. There is nothing that is more deſirable for the common good of all the world. For though *women* don't carry on the *trade* and *buſineſs* of the world, yet as they are *mothers*, and *miſtreſſes* of families, that have for ſome time the care of the education of their children of both ſorts, they are intruſted with that which is of the greateſt conſequence to human life. For this reaſon, *good* or *bad* women are likely to do as much good or harm in the world, as good or bad men in the greateſt buſineſs of life.

For as the *health* and *ſtrength*, or *weakneſs* of our bodies, is very much owing to *their methods*

methods of treating us when we were young; ſo the *ſoundneſs* or *folly* of our minds are not leſs owing to thoſe *firſt tempers* and ways of thinking, which we eagerly receiv'd from the *love*, *tenderneſs*, *authority*, and conſtant *converſation* of our mothers.

As we call our firſt language our *mother-tongue*, ſo we may as juſtly call our firſt tempers our *mother-tempers*; and perhaps it may be found more eaſy to forget the *language*, than to part entirely with thoſe *tempers* which we learnt in the *nurſery*.

It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *ſex*, on whom ſo much depends, who have the firſt forming both of our *bodies* and our *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *fillieſt* and moſt *contemptible* part of it.

They are not indeed ſuffer'd to diſpute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *ſciences*, of *learning* and *eloquence*, in which I have much ſuſpicion they would *often* prove our ſuperiors; but we turn them over to the ſtudy of *beauty* and *dreſs*, and the whole world conſpires to make them think of nothing elſe. *Fathers* and *mothers*, *friends* and *relations*, ſeem to have no other wiſh towards the *little girl*, but that ſhe may have a *fair ſkin*, a *fine ſhape*, *dreſs well*, and *dance* to admiration.

Now if a fondneſs for our *perſons*, a deſire of *beauty*, a love of *dreſs*, be a part of pride (as ſurely it is a moſt contemptible part of it) the firſt ſtep towards a *woman's humility*, ſeems to require a *repentance* of her education.

For

For it must be own'd, that, generally speaking, good parents are never more fond of their daughters, than when they see them *too fond* of themselves, and *dress'd* in such a manner, as is a great reproach to the gravity and sobriety of the Christian life.

And what makes this matter still more to be lamented, is this, That women are not only spoil'd by this education, but we spoil that *part* of the world, which would otherwise furnish *most instances* of an eminent and exalted piety.

For I believe it may be affirmed, that for the most part there is a *finer sense*, a *clearer mind*, a *readier apprehension*, and *gentler dispositions* in that *sex*, than in the other.

All which tempers, if they were truly improved by *proper* studies, and *sober* methods of education, would in all probability carry them to greater heights of piety, than are to be found amongst the generality of men.

For this reason I speak to this matter with so much openness and plainness, because it is much to be lamented, that persons so *naturally* qualified to be great examples of *piety*, should by an erroneous education, be made *poor* and *gaudy* spectacles of the greatest vanity.

The *Church* has formerly had *eminent saints* in that sex, and it may reasonably be thought, that it is purely owing to their *poor* and *vain* education, that this honour of their sex is for the *most part* confin'd to *former* ages.

The

The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind seem to consider them in no other view, than as so many *painted idols*, that are to allure and gratify their passions; so that if many women are *vain light*, *gugaw* creatures, they have this to excuse themselves, that they are not only such as their *education* has made them, but such as the *generality* of the world *allows* them to be.

But then they should consider, that the *friends* to their *vanity* are no friends of theirs; they should consider, that they are to live for *themselves*, that they have as great a share in the *rational nature* as men have; that they have as much *reason* to pretend, and as much *necessity* to aspire after the *highest accomplishments* of a Christian and solid virtue, as the *gravest* and *wisest* amongst Christian *Philosophers*.

They should consider, that they are *abus'd* and *injur'd*, and *betray'd* from their *only perfection*, whenever they are taught, that any thing is an *ornament* in them, that is not an ornament in the *wisest* amongst mankind.

It is generally said, that *women* are naturally of *little* and *vain minds*; but this I look upon to be as *false* and *unreasonable*, as to say, that *butchers* are naturally *cruel*; for as their cruelty is not owing to their *nature*, but to their *way* of life, which has changed their nature; so whatever *littleness* and *vanity* is to be observed in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of *butchers*, a temper that is

wrought

wrought into them by that life which they are *taught* and *accuſtomed* to lead.

At leaſt thus much muſt be ſaid, that we cannot charge any thing upon their *nature* till we take care that it is not *perverted* by their education.

And on the other hand, if it were true that they were thus naturally vain and light, then how much more blameable is that education, which ſeems contriv'd to *ſtrengthen* and *increaſe* this folly and weakneſs of their minds?

For if it were a virtue in a woman to be proud and vain in herſelf, we could hardly take better means to raiſe this paſſion in her, than thoſe that are now uſed in their education.

Matilda is a fine woman, of good *breeding*, great *ſenſe*, and much *religion*. She has three daughters that are educated by herſelf. She will not truſt them with any one elſe, or at any *ſchool*, for fear they ſhould learn any thing ill. She ſtays with the *Dancing-maſter* all the time he is with them, becauſe ſhe will hear every thing that is ſaid to them. She has heard them read the Scriptures ſo often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: And there is ſcarce a good book of *devotion*, but you may find it in their *cloſets*.

Had *Matilda* liv'd in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, when it was practis'd in the *fulneſs* and *plainneſs* of its doctrines, ſhe had in all probability been one of its greateſt ſaints.

But as ſhe was born in corrupt times, where ſhe wants examples of Chriſtian perfection, and hardly ever ſaw a piety higher than her own; ſo ſhe has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was *meanly* dreſs'd in her life; and nothing pleaſes her in *dreſs*, but that which is very *rich*, and *beautiful* to the eye.

Her daughters ſee her great zeal for Religion, but then they ſee an equal earneſtneſs for all ſorts of *finery*. They ſee ſhe is not negligent of her *devotion*, but then they ſee her more careful to preſerve her *complexion*, and to prevent thoſe changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have miſs'd the *Church*; but then they are more afraid to ſee her, if they are not *lac'd* as *ſtraight* as they can poſſibly be.

She often ſhews them her *own picture*, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how *diſtracted* he was with paſſion at the *firſt ſight* of her, and that ſhe had never had ſo *fine* a *complexion*, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is ſo intent upon all the arts of improving their *dreſs*, that ſhe has ſome *new fancy* almoſt every day, and leaves no ornament untry'd from the richeſt *jewel* to the pooreſt *flower*. She is ſo nice and critical in her judgment, ſo ſenſible of the ſmalleſt error that the *maid* is often forced to dreſs and undreſs

dreſs her daughters three or four times in a day, before ſhe can be ſatisfy'd with it.

As to the *patching*, ſhe reſerves that to her ſelf; for, ſhe ſays, if they are not ſtuck on with judgment, they are rather a prejudice, than an advantage to the *face*.

The children ſee ſo plainly the *temper* of their mother, that they even affect to be *more pleas'd* with dreſs, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They ſaw their eldeſt ſiſter once brought to her *tears*, and her *perverſeneſs* ſeverely reprimanded, for preſuming to ſay, that ſhe thought it was better to cover the *neck*, than to go ſo *far naked* as the modern dreſs requires.

She ſtints them in their *meals*, and is very ſcrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many *fine ſhapes* ſhe has ſeen ſpoil'd in her time for want of ſuch care. If a *pimple* riſes in their faces, ſhe is in a great fright, and they themſelves are as afraid to ſee her with it, as if they had committed ſome great ſin.

Whenever they begin to look too *ſanguine* and *healthful*, ſhe calls in the aſſiſtance of the *doctor*; and if *phyſick*, or *iſſues*, will keep the complexion from inclining to *coarſe* or *ruddy*, ſhe thinks them well employ'd.

By this means they are *poor*, *pale*, *ſickly*, *infirm* creatures, *vapour'd* through want of ſpirits, *crying* at the ſmalleſt accidents, *ſwooning* away at any thing that frights them, and

hardly able to bear the *weight* of their beſt cloaths.

The eldeſt daughter liv'd as long as ſhe could under this diſcipline, and dy'd in the twentieth year of her age.

When her body was open'd, it appear'd that her *ribs* had grown into her *liver*, and that her other *entrails* were much hurt, by being *cruſh'd* together with her *ſtays*, which her mother had order'd to be twitch'd ſo ſtrait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilſt the maid was dreſſing her.

Her youngeſt daughter is run away with a *gameſter*, a man of great beauty, who in *dreſſing* and *dancing* has no ſuperior.

Matilda ſays, ſhe ſhould die with grief at this accident; but that her *conſcience* tells her, ſhe has contributed nothing to it her ſelf. She appeals to their *cloſets*, to their books of devotion, to teſtify what care ſhe has taken to eſtabliſh her children in a life of ſolid piety and devotion.

Now though I don't intend to ſay, that no daughters are brought up in a *better way* than this, for I hope there are many that are; yet thus much I believe may be ſaid, that the much greater part of them, are not brought up ſo well, or accuſtomed to ſo much Religion, as in the preſent inſtance.

Their minds are turn'd as much to the care of their beauty and dreſs, and the indulgence of vain deſires, as in the preſent caſe, without having ſuch rules of devotion to ſtand

againſt it. So that if *ſolid* piety, *humility*, and a *ſober ſenſe* of themſelves, is much wanted in that ſex, it is the plain and natural conſequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And if they are often too ready to receive the firſt *fops*, *beaux*, and fine *dancers*, for their huſbands; 'tis no wonder they ſhould like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themſelves.

And if they are often ſeen to loſe that little Religion they were taught in their youth, 'tis no more to be wonder'd at, than to ſee a *little flower* choak'd and kill'd amongſt *rank weeds*.

For *perſonal* pride, and *affectation*, a *delight* in beauty, and *fondneſs* of finery, are tempers that muſt either kill all Religion in the ſoul, or be themſelves kill'd by it; they can no more thrive together, than *health* and *ſickneſs*.

Some people that judge haſtily, will perhaps here ſay, that I am exerciſing too great a ſeverity againſt the ſex.

But more reaſonable perſons will eaſily obſerve, that I entirely ſpare the *ſex*, and only arraign their *education*; that I not only ſpare them, but plead their *intereſt*, aſſert their *honour*, ſet forth their *perfections*, commend their *natural* tempers, and only condemn that *education*, which is ſo *injurious* to their intereſts, ſo *debaſes* their honour, and *deprives*

them of the benefit of their *excellent* natures and tempers.

Their education, I profeſs, I cannot ſpare; but the only reaſon is, becauſe it is their *greateſt enemy*, becauſe it deprives the world of ſo many *bleſſings*, and the Church of ſo many *ſaints*, as might reaſonably be expected from perſons, ſo form'd by their natural tempers to all goodneſs and tenderneſs, and ſo fitted by the clearneſs and brightneſs of their minds, to contemplate, love and admire every thing that is holy, virtuous and divine.

If it ſhould here be ſaid, that I even charge *too high* upon their *education*, and that they are not ſo *much* hurt by it, as I imagine:

It may be anſwer'd, that though I don't pretend to ſtate the *exact degree* of miſchief that is done by it, yet its plain and natural tendency to do harm, is ſufficient to juſtify the moſt *abſolute* condemnation of it.

But if any one would know, how *generally* women are hurt by this education; if he imagines there may be no perſonal pride, or vain fondneſs of themſelves, in thoſe that are *patch'd* and *dreſs'd* out with ſo much glitter of *art* and *ornament*:

Let him only make the following experiment where-ever he pleaſes.

Let him only acquaint any ſuch woman with his opinion of her: I don't mean that he ſhould tell her to her face, or do it in any rude

rude publick manner; but let him contrive the moſt *civil*, *ſecret*, *friendly* way that he can think of only to let her know his opinion, that he thinks ſhe is neither *handſome*, nor *dreſſes* well, nor *becomes* her finery; and I dare ſay, he will find there are but very few *fine dreſs'd* women, that will like him never the worſe for his *bare opinion*, though known to none but themſelves; and that he will not be long without ſeeing the *effects* of her reſentment.

But if ſuch an experiment would ſhew him that there are but few ſuch women that could bear with his *friendſhip*, after they knew he had ſuch an opinion of them, ſurely it is time to complain of, and accuſe that *education*, which ſo *generally* corrupts their hearts.

For though it is hard to judge of the hearts of people, yet where they *declare* their *reſentment*, and *uneaſineſs* at any thing, there they paſs the judgment upon themſelves. If a woman can't *forgive* a man who thinks ſhe has no *beauty*, nor any *ornament* from her dreſs, there ſhe *infallibly* diſcovers the *ſtate* of her own heart, and is condemn'd by *her own*, and not another's judgment.

For we never are *angry* at others, but when their opinions of us are contrary to that which we have of our ſelves.

A man that makes no *pretences* to ſcholarſhip, is never angry at thoſe that don't take him to be a *ſcholar*: So if a woman had no *opinion* of her own *perſon* and *dreſs*, ſhe would

never be *angry* at thoſe, who are of the *ſame opinion* with her ſelf.

So that the general bad effects of this education are too much known, to admit of any reaſonable doubt.

But how poſſible it is to bring up daughters in a more excellent way, let the following character declare.

Euſebia is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good eſtate for five daughters, whom ſhe brings up as one entruſted by God, to fit five Virgins for the kingdom of Heaven. Her family has the ſame regulation as a *religious houſe*, and all its orders tend to the ſupport of a conſtant regular devotion.

She, her *daughters*, and her *maids*, meet together at all the *hours of prayer* in the day, and chant Pſalms, and other devotions, and ſpend the reſt of their time in ſuch good works, and innocent diverſions, as render them fit to return to their *Pſalms* and *Prayers*.

She loves them as her ſpiritual children, and they reverence her as their ſpiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondeſt friends.

She has divided part of her eſtate amongſt them, that every one may be charitable out of their own ſtock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the *poor* and *ſick* of the Pariſh.

Euſebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as *ſowing*, *knitting*,

knitting, *ſpinning*, and all other parts of *houſe-wifery*; not for their *amuſement*, but that they may be ſerviceable to themſelves and others, and be ſav'd from thoſe temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them, ſhe had rather ſee them reduced to the neceſſity of maintaining themſelves by their own work, than to have riches to excuſe themſelves from labour. For though, ſays ſhe, you may be able to aſſiſt the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to aſſiſt them more.

If *Euſebia* has liv'd as free from ſin as it is poſſible for human nature, it is becauſe ſhe is always watching and guarding againſt *all inſtances* of pride. And if her virtues are ſtronger and higher than other people's, 'tis becauſe they are all founded in a deep *humility*.

My children, ſays ſhe, when your father dy'd, I was much pity'd by my friends, as having all the care of a family, and the management of an eſtate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle; I was griev'd to ſee my ſelf depriv'd of ſo faithful a friend, and that ſuch an eminent example of Chriſtian virtues, ſhould be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought ſo heavy upon me, they are moſt of

them of our own making, and fall away as ſoon as we *know our ſelves*.

If a perſon in a *dream* is diſturb'd with ſtrange appearances, his trouble is over as ſoon as he is *awake*, and ſees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now when a right knowledge of our ſelves enters into our minds, it makes as great a change in all our thoughts and apprehenſions, as when we *awake* from the *wandrings* of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be *mad*, or *melancholy*, who fancies himſelf to be *glaſs*, and ſo is afraid of ſtirring; or taking himſelf to be *wax*, dare not let the *Sun* ſhine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which paſs for *wiſdom*, *politeneſs*, *grandeur*, *happineſs*, and *fine breeding*, which ſhew as great *ignorance* of our ſelves, and might as juſtly paſs for *thorough madneſs*, as when a man fancies himſelf to be *glaſs*, or *ice*.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without *fine cloaths*, that thinks it a happineſs to have a face *finely colour'd*, to have a ſkin *delicately fair*, that had rather die than be reduc'd to poverty, and be forc'd to work for a poor maintenance, is as ignorant of her ſelf to the full, as he that fancies himſelf to be *glaſs*.

For this reaſon, all my diſcourſe with you, has been to acquaint you with your ſelves, and to accuſtom you to ſuch books and devotions,

tions, as may beſt inſtruct you in this greateſt of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you was born, what anceſtors you were deſcended from, and what eſtate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactneſs, and yet be as ignorant of your ſelves, as he that takes himſelf to be *wax*.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you *pure ſpirits*. I don't mean that you have not bodies that want *meat* and *drink*, and *ſleep*, and *cloathing*, but that *all* that deſerves to be called *you*, is nothing elſe but *ſpirit*. A being ſpiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleſhly or corporeal beings, as *life* is contrary to *death*; that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to ceaſe any more, but to enjoy *life*, and *reaſon*, and *knowledge*, and *happineſs* in the preſence of God, and the ſociety of Angels, and glorious Spirits, to all eternity.

Every thing that you call yours, beſides this ſpirit, is but like your *cloathing*; ſomething that is only to be us'd for a while, and then to *end*, and *die*, and *wear away*, and to ſignify no more to you, than the *cloathing* and *bodies* of other people.

But, my children, you are not only in this manner *ſpirits*, but you are *fallen* ſpirits, that began your life in a ſtate of corruption and diſor-

diſorder, full of tempers and paſſions, that blind and darken the reaſon of your mind and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only *poor* and *periſhing* like your cloaths, but they are like *infected cloaths*, that fill you with ill diſeaſes and diſtempers, which oppreſs the ſoul with ſickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we ſee, and taſte, and admire reaſon, purity and holineſs; with the other we incline to pride, and vanity, and ſenſual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or leſs; and if you would know the one thing neceſſary to all the world, it is this; to preſerve and perfect all that is *rational*, *holy* and *divine* in our nature, and to mortify, remove and deſtroy all that *vanity*, *pride* and *ſenſuality*, which ſprings from the corruption of our ſtate?

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and ſee what *cuſtoms*, and *faſhions*, and *pleaſures*, and *troubles*, and *projects*, and *tempers*, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But don't you be affected at theſe things, the world is in a great *dream*, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkneſs, when we die; but alas, we are moſt of us in the dark 'till then; and the eyes of our ſouls only

ly then begin to ſee, when our bodily eyes are cloſing.

You ſee then your ſtate, my children; you are to honour, improve and perfect the ſpirit that is within you, you are to prepare it for the kingdom of Heaven, to nouriſh it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good-works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preſerve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to ſave it from the corruptions of the body, from thoſe falſe delights, and ſenſual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nouriſh your ſpirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, faſtings, and prayers, that you may taſte, and reliſh, and deſire that eternal ſtate, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to conſider them as *poor*, *periſhing* things, that are ſickly and corrupt at preſent, and will ſoon drop into common duſt. You are to watch over them as *enemies*, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and ſo never follow their advice and counſel; you are to conſider them as the *place* and *habitation* of your ſouls, and ſo keep them *pure*, and *clean*, and *decent*; you are to conſider them as the ſervants and inſtruments of action, and ſo give them *food*, and *reſt*, and *raiment*, that they may be ſtrong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, uſeful, pious life.

Whilſt

Whilſt you live thus, you live like your ſelves; and whenever you have leſs regard to your ſouls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your perſons, than upon the perfecting of your ſouls, you are much more beſide yourſelves, than he, that had rather have a *lac'd coat*, than an healthful body.

For this reaſon, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into *weakneſs* and *folly*; or make you think any thing fine, but a *fine mind*; any thing happy, but the favour of God; or any thing deſirable, but to do all the good you poſſibly can.

Inſtead of the vain, immodeſt entertainment of *Plays* and *Opera's*, I have taught you to delight in viſiting the *ſick* and *poor*. What *muſick*, and *dancing*, and *diverſions* are to many in the world, that prayers and devotions, and Pſalms are to you. Your hands have not been employ'd in plaiting the hair, and adorning your perſons; but in making cloaths for the naked. You have not waſted your fortunes upon yourſelves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Inſtead of forc'd *ſhapes*, *patch'd faces*, *genteel airs*, and *affected motions*, I have taught you to *conceal* your bodies with *modeſt garments*, and let the world have nothing to view of you,

you, but the *plainneſs*, the *ſincerity*, and *humility* of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the *high perfection*, and the *great rewards* of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furniſhes means and opportunities of higher advancements in a divine life; therefore love, and eſteem, and honour virginity: bleſs God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of Chriſtianity have, in the ſeveral ages of the Church, renounced the cares and pleaſures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of ſolitude, contemplation, and prayer.

But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be ſo many great bleſſings of a married ſtate; ſo I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aſpire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin ſtate of life.

I deſire nothing, I preſs nothing upon you, but to make the moſt of human life, and to aſpire after perfection in whatever ſtate of life you chuſe.

Never therefore conſider yourſelves as perſons that are to be *ſeen*, *admir'd* and *courted* by men; but as *poor ſinners*, that are to ſave yourſelves from the vanities and follies of a miſerable world, by *humility*, *devotion*, and *ſelf-denial*. Learn to live for your own ſakes, and the ſervice of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which

which you can turn into a ſervice to God, and a means of your future happineſs.

Conſider often how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with every thing that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and ſhortneſs of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds; for theſe thoughts will ſtrengthen and exalt your minds, make you wiſe and judicious, and truly ſenſible of the littleneſs of all human things.

Think of the happineſs of prophets and apoſtles, ſaints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the preſence of God, and ſee themſelves poſſeſſors of eternal glory. And then think how deſirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you dye you may have your lot amongſt them.

Whether marry'd therefore, or unmarry'd, conſider yourſelves as mothers and ſiſters, as friends and relations to all that want your aſſiſtance; and never allow yourſelves to be idle, whilſt others are in want of any thing that your hands can make for them.

This uſeful, charitable, humble employment of yourſelves, is what I recommend to you with great earneſtneſs, as being a ſubſtantial part of a wiſe and pious life. And beſides the good you will thereby do to other people,

people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improv'd by it.

For next to *reading*, *meditation*, and *prayer*, there is nothing that ſo ſecures our hearts from fooliſh paſſions, nothing that preſerves ſo holy and wiſe a frame of mind, as ſome *uſeful*, *humble* employment of ourſelves.

Never therefore conſider your labour as an *amuſement*, that is to get rid of your time, and ſo may be as trifling as you pleaſe; but conſider it as ſomething that is to be ſerviceable to yourſelves and others, that is to ſerve ſome ſober ends of life, to ſave and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account, when the works of all people ſhall be try'd by fire.

When you was little, I left you to little amuſements, to pleaſe yourſelves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God, and your ſelves; as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of Religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but deſpiſe every thing that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands ſuitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourſelves for the ſame ends, and with the ſame ſpirit, as you *watch* and *pray*.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can poſſibly employ yourſelves uſefully to other people, how ſilly is it, how con-

contrary to the wiſdom of Religion, to make that a *mere amuſement*, which might as eaſily be made an exerciſe of the *greateſt charity?*

What would you think of the wiſdom of him, that ſhould employ his time in diſtilling of waters, and making liquors which no body could uſe, merely to amuſe himſelf with the variety of their colour and clearneſs, when with leſs labour and expence he might ſatisfy the wants of thoſe, who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wiſely employ'd, as thoſe that are amuſing themſelves with ſuch tedious works as they neither need, nor hardly know how to uſe when they are finiſh'd; when with leſs labour and expence they might be doing as much good, as he that is *cloathing* the naked, or *viſiting* the ſick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the pooreſt people, and let your hands be employ'd in making ſuch *mean* and *ordinary* things for them, as their neceſſities require. By thus making your labour a gift and ſervice to the poor, your ordinary work will be chang'd into a holy ſervice, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And as charity is the greateſt of all virtues, as it always was the *chief temper* of the greateſt ſaints; ſo nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the ſight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The *humility* alſo of this employment will be as beneficial to you, as the charity of it.

It

It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own ſtate and diſtinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different ſpecies. By accuſtoming yourſelves to this labour and ſervice for the poor, as the *repreſentatives* of Jeſus Chriſt, you will ſoon find your heart ſoften'd into the greateſt meekneſs and lowlineſs towards them. You will reverence their eſtate and condition, think it an *honour* to ſerve them, and never be ſo pleas'd with yourſelf, as when you are *moſt humbly* employ'd in their ſervice.

This will make you true diſciples of your meek Lord and Maſter, who *came into the world not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter*; and tho' he was Lord of all, and amongſt the creatures of his own making, yet was amongſt them, *as one that ſerveth.*

Chriſtianity has then had its moſt glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your ſpirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourſelves beneath the loweſt of all your fellow-creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious viſits, and vain acquaintances, have as little of your time as you poſſibly can. Contract no fooliſh friendſhips, or vain fondneſſes for particular perſons; but love them moſt, that moſt turn your love towards God, and your compaſſion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the converſation of *fine-bred fops* and *beaux*, and hate nothing more than the idle diſcourſe, the flattery and compliments of that ſort of men; for they are the *ſhame* of their own *ſex*, and ought to be the *abhorrence* of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modeſty, and a decent carriage, be all the *ſtate* that you take upon you; and let tenderneſs, compaſſion, and good nature, be all the *fine breeding* that you ſhew in any place.

If evil *ſpeaking*, *ſcandal*, or *backbiting*, be the converſation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourſelf; be as much griev'd, as if you was amongſt curſing and ſwearing, and retire as ſoon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, till you find a man that has thoſe perfections, which you have been labouring after your ſelves; who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love *poverty*, and reverence *poor people*; as for many reaſons, ſo particularly for this, becauſe our bleſſed Saviour was one of the number, and becauſe you may make them all ſo many *friends* and *advocates* with God for you.

Viſit and converſe with them frequently; you will often find *ſimplicity*, *innocence*, *patience*, *fortitude*, and great piety amongſt them; and

and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds; whether it be, as the Scripture expresses it, in *washing the saints feet*, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues; and every thing that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject every thing in *dress*, or *carriage*, or *conversation*, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do every thing that is praise-worthy, but do nothing in order to be praised; nor think of any reward for all your labours of love and virtue, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as

you would reject the moſt wicked imaginations; and think what a loſs it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works devour'd by the vanity of your own minds.

Never therefore allow yourſelves to deſpiſe thoſe who do not follow your rules of life; but force your hearts to love them, and pray to God for them; and let *humility* be always *whiſpering* it into your ears, that you your ſelves will fall from thoſe rules to-morrow, if God ſhould leave you to your own ſtrength and wiſdom.

When therefore you have ſpent days and weeks well, don't ſuffer your hearts to contemplate any thing as your own, but give all the glory to the goodneſs of God, who has carry'd you through ſuch rules of holy living, as you were not able to obſerve by your own ſtrength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue, that can do great matters, but as *poor beginners*, that want the daily aſſiſtance of God to ſave you from the *groſſeſt ſins*.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wiſe man. Whilſt his ſickneſs would ſuffer him to talk with me, his diſcourſe was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he ſaw the ruins which pride made in our ſex; and therefore he conjur'd me with the tendereſt expreſſions, to renounce the *faſhionable ways* of educating daughters in *pride* and *ſoftneſs*, in the care of their *beauty* and *dreſs*; and to bring you all up

in

in the *plainest*, *simplest* instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an *admirable rule* of humility, which he practis'd all the days of his life; which was this; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some *frailty* and *infirmity* of our own, that may put us to *confusion*, make us *blush inwardly*, and entertain a mean opinion of our selves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and I, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow-creatures, 'till God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for its self, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

A *daughter* thus educated, would be a blessing to any family that she came into; a fit companion for a wise man, and make him happy in the government of his family, and the education of his children.

And she that either was not inclin'd, or could not dispose of her self well in marriage,

would know how to live to great and excellent ends in a ſtate of virginity.

A very ordinary knowledge of the *ſpirit* of Chriſtianity, ſeems to be enough to convince us, that no education can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble induſtry*, in *great plainneſs* of life, in *exact modeſty* of *dreſs*, *manners* and *carriage*, and in *ſtrict devotion*. For what ſhould a Chriſtian woman be, but a *plain*, *unaffected*, *modeſt*, *humble* creature, averſe to every thing in her *dreſs* and *carriage*, that can draw the eyes of beholders, or gratify the paſſions of lewd and amorous perſons?

How great a ſtranger muſt he be to the Goſpel, who does not know that it requires this to be the ſpirit of a pious woman?

Our bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Whoſoever looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

St. Matth. v. 28.

Need an education which turns women's minds to the *arts* and *ornaments* of dreſs and beauty, be more ſtrongly condemn'd, than by theſe words? For ſurely, if the eye is ſo eaſily and dangerouſly betray'd, every *art* and *ornament* is ſufficiently condemn'd, that naturally tends to betray it.

And how can a woman of piety more juſtly abhor and avoid any thing, than that which makes her perſon more a *ſnare* and *temptation* to other people? If *luſt*, and *wanton eyes* are the death of the ſoul, can any women think them-

themſelves innocent, who with naked breaſts, patch'd faces, and every ornament of dreſs, invite the eye to offend?

And as there is no pretence for innocence in ſuch a behaviour, ſo neither can they tell how to ſet any bounds to their guilt. For as they can never know how much, or how often they have occaſion'd ſin in other people, ſo they can never know how much guilt will be plac'd to their own account.

This one would think ſhould ſufficiently deter every pious woman from every thing that might render her the occaſion of looſe paſſions in other people.

St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of a thing entirely *innocent*, reaſons after this manner: *But take heed, leſt by any means this liberty of yours become a ſtumbling-block to thoſe that are weak.——And through thy knowledge thy weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died. But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.* 1 Cor. viii 9, 11.

Now if this is the ſpirit of Chriſtianity; if it requires us to abſtain from things thus lawful, innocent and uſeful, when there is any danger of betraying our weak brethren into any error thereby: Surely it cannot be reckon'd too *nice* or *needleſs* a point of conſcience, for women to avoid ſuch things, as are neither innocent nor uſeful, but *naturally* tend to

corrupt their own hearts, and raiſe ill paſſions in other people.

Surely every woman of chriſtian piety ought to ſay, in the ſpirit of the Apoſtle, if *patching* and *paint*, or any *vain adorning* of my perſon, be a natural means of making weak, unwary eyes to offend, I will renounce all theſe arts as long as I live, leſt I ſhould make my fellow-creatures to offend.

I ſhall now leave this ſubject of *humility*; having ſaid enough, as I hope, to recommend the neceſſity of making it the conſtant, chief ſubject of your devotion at this hour of prayer.

I have conſider'd the nature and neceſſity of humility, and its great importance to a religious life. I have ſhewn you how many difficulties are form'd againſt it from our natural tempers, the ſpirit of the world, and the common education of both ſexes.

Theſe conſiderations will, I hope, inſtruct you how to form your prayers for it to the beſt advantage; and teach you the neceſſity of letting no day paſs, without a ſerious earneſt application to God, for the *whole ſpirit* of humility. Fervently beſeeching him to fill every part of your ſoul with it, to make it the ruling, conſtant habit of your mind, that you may not only feel it, but feel all your other tempers ariſing from it; that you may have no thoughts, no deſires, no deſigns, but ſuch as are the true fruits of an humble, meek, and lowly heart.

That

That you may always appear poor, and little, and mean in your own eyes, and fully content that others ſhould have the ſame opinion of you.

That the whole *courſe* of your life, your *expence*, your *houſe*, your *dreſs*, your manner of *eating*, *drinking*, *converſing*, and doing *every thing*, may be ſo many continual proofs of the true unfeigned humility of your heart.

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, reſent nothing; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life calmly and quietly, as in the preſence of God, looking wholly unto him, acting wholly for him; neither ſeeking vain applauſe, nor reſenting neglects, or affronts, but doing and receiving every thing in the meek and lowly ſpirit of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Recommending Devotion at twelve o'Clock, call'd in Scripture the ſixth hour *of the day. This frequency of Devotion equally deſirable by all orders of people.* Univerſal love *is here recommended to be the ſubject of prayer at this hour. Of interceſſion, as an act of univerſal love.*

IT will perhaps be thought by ſome people, that theſe hours of prayer come *too thick*; that they can only be obſerv'd by people of great leiſure, and ought not to be *preſs'd* upon the generality of men, who have the *cares* of families, *trades* and *employments*; nor upon the *gentry*, whoſe *ſtate* and *figure* in the world cannot admit of this frequency of Devotion. And that it is only fit for *Monaſteries* and *Nunneries*, or ſuch people as have no more to do in the world than they have.

To this it is anſwer'd,

Firſt, that this method of Devotion is not preſs'd upon any ſort of people, as *abſolutely neceſſary*, but recommended to *all people*, as the *beſt*, the *happieſt*, and moſt *perfect* way of life.

And if a great and exemplary Devotion is as much the greateſt happineſs and perfection of

of a *Merchant*, a *Soldier*, or a man of *Quality*, as it is the greateſt happineſs and perfection of the moſt *retir'd contemplative* life, then it is as proper to recommend it without any *abatements* to one order of men, as to another. Becauſe happineſs and perfection are of the ſame worth and value to all people.

The *Gentleman* and *Tradeſman* may, and muſt ſpend much of their time differently from the pious *Monk* in the *cloyſter*, or the contemplative *Hermit* in the *deſart:* But then, as the *Monk* and *Hermit* loſe the ends of retirement, unleſs they make it all ſerviceable to Devotion; ſo the *Gentleman* and *Merchant* fail of the greateſt ends of a *ſocial life*, and live to their loſs in the world, unleſs Devotion be their *chief* and *governing* temper.

It is certainly very *honeſt* and *creditable* for people to engage in *trades* and *employments*; it is reaſonable for *Gentlemen* to manage well their *eſtates* and *families*, and take ſuch recreations as are proper to their ſtate. But then every Gentleman and Tradeſman loſes the greateſt happineſs of his creation, is robb'd of ſomething that is greater than all employments, diſtinctions and pleaſures of the world, if he does not live more to *Piety* and *Devotion*, than to any thing elſe in the world.

Here are therefore no excuſes made for men of *buſineſs* and *figure* in the world. *Firſt*, Becauſe it would be to excuſe them from that which is the greateſt end of living; and be

only finding ſo many reaſons for making them *leſs beneficial* to themſelves, and *leſs ſerviceable* to God and the world.

Secondly, Becauſe moſt men of buſineſs and figure engage *too far* in worldly matters; much farther than the reaſons of human life, or the neceſſities of the world require.

Merchants and *Tradeſmen*, for inſtance, are generally ten times farther engag'd in buſineſs than they need; which is ſo far from being a reaſonable *excuſe* for their want of time for Devotion, that it is their *crime*, and muſt be cenſur'd as a blameable inſtance of covetouſneſs and ambition.

The *Gentry*, and people of *Figure*, either give themſelves up to *State-employments*, or to the gratifications of their *paſſions*, in a life of *gaiety* and *debauchery*; and if theſe things might be admitted as allowable avocations from Devotion, Devotion muſt be reckon'd a poor circumſtance of life.

Unleſs *Gentlemen* can ſhew that they have another God, than the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; another Nature, than that which is deriv'd from *Adam*; another Religion than the Chriſtian, 'tis in vain to plead their ſtate, and dignity, and pleaſures, as reaſons for not preparing their ſouls for God, by a *ſtrict* and *regular* Devotion.

For ſince Piety and Devotion are the *common unchangeable* means of ſaving all the ſouls in the world that ſhall be ſaved, there is nothing

thing left for the *Gentleman*, the *Soldier*, and the *Tradesman*, but to take care that their several states be, by care and watchfulness, by meditation and prayer, made states of an *exact* and *solid piety*.

If a *Merchant*, having forbore from too great business, that he might quietly attend on the service of God, should therefore dye worth *twenty*, instead of *fifty* thousand pounds, could any one say that he had mistaken his *calling*, or gone a *loser* out of the world?

If a *Gentleman* should have killed *fewer foxes*, been less frequent at *balls*, *gaming*, and *merry-meetings*, because stated parts of his time had been given to *retirement*, to *meditation* and *devotion*, could it be thought, that when he left the world, he would regret the loss of those hours that he had given to the care and improvement of his soul?

If a *Tradesman* by aspiring after Christian perfection, and retiring himself often from his business, should instead of leaving his children fortunes to spend in *luxury* and *idleness*, leave them to live by their own honest labour; could it be said, that he had made a *wrong use* of the world, because he had shewn his children, that he had more regard to that which is eternal, than to this which is so soon to be at an end?

Since therefore devotion is not only the best and most desirable practice in a *Cloyster*, but the best and most desirable practice of men, as men, and in *every state* of life, they that desire

ſire to be excus'd from it, becauſe they are men of *figure*, and *eſtates*, and *buſineſs*, are no wiſer than thoſe that ſhould deſire to be excus'd from *health* and *happineſs*, becauſe they were men of *figure* and *eſtates*.

I can't ſee why every *Gentleman*, *Merchant*, or *Soldier*, ſhould not put theſe queſtions ſeriouſly to himſelf:

What is the beſt thing for me to intend and drive at in all my actions? How ſhall I do to make the moſt of human life? What ways ſhall I wiſh that I had taken, when I am leaving the world?

Now to be thus wiſe, and to make thus much uſe of our reaſon, ſeems to be but a *ſmall* and *neceſſary* piece of wiſdom. For how can we pretend to ſenſe and judgment, if we dare not ſeriouſly conſider, and anſwer, and govern our lives by that which ſuch queſtions require of us?

Shall a *Nobleman* think his birth too high a dignity to condeſcend to ſuch queſtions as theſe? Or a *Tradeſman* think his buſineſs too great, to take any care about himſelf?

Now here is deſir'd no more devotion in any one's life, than the anſwering theſe *few queſtions*, requires.

Any devotion that is not to the greater advantage of him that uſes it, than any thing that he can do in the *room* of it; any devotion that does not procure an *infinitely greater* good, than can be got by neglecting it, is freely yielded up, here is no demand of it.

But

But if people will live in ſo *much ignorance*, as never to put theſe queſtions to themſelves, but puſh on a blind life at all chances, in queſt of they don't know what, nor why; without ever conſidering the worth, or value, or tendency of their actions, without conſidering what God, *reaſon*, *eternity*, and their own happineſs require of them; it is for the honour of *devotion*, that none can neglect it, but thoſe who are thus inconſiderate, who dare not enquire after that which is the beſt, and moſt worthy of their choice.

It is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of *figure* and *eſtate*, and are to act the part of ſuch a ſtation in human life; you are not call'd as *Elijah* was to be a Prophet, or as St. *Paul*, to be an Apoſtle.

But will you therefore not love yourſelf? Will you not ſeek and ſtudy your own happineſs, becauſe you are not call'd to preach up the ſame things to other people?

You would think it very abſurd, for a man not to value his own *health*, becauſe he was not a *Phyſician*; or the preſervation of his *limbs*, becauſe he was not a *bone-ſetter*. Yet it is more abſurd for you, *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your ſoul in piety, becauſe you are not an Apoſtle, or a Biſhop.

Conſider this text of Scripture,

If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall dye; but if through the ſpirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii 13, 14.

God, they are the Sons of God. Do you think that this Scripture does not equally relate to all mankind? Can you find any exception here for men of *figure* and *eſtates?* Is not a *ſpiritual* and *devout* life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become *ſons* of God? Will you leave *hours of prayer*, and rules of devotion, to particular ſtates of life, when nothing but the ſame ſpirit of devotion can ſave you, or any man, from eternal death?

Conſider again this text: *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Now if your *eſtate* would excuſe you from appearing before this judgment-ſeat; if your *figure* could protect you from receiving according to your works, there would be ſome pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus diſtinguiſh'd, muſt then appear *naked* amongſt *common ſouls*, without any other diſtinction from others, but ſuch as your virtues or ſins give you; does it not as much concern you, as any *Prophet*, or *Apoſtle*, to make the beſt proviſion for the beſt rewards at that great day?

2 Cor. v. 10.

Again, conſider this doctrine of the Apoſtle: *For none of us*, that is, of us Chriſtians, *liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we dye,*

Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

dye, we dye unto the Lord. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text? Will you, because of your *condition*, leave it to any particular sort of people, to *live* and *dye* unto Christ? If so, you must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for *this end* Christ dy'd and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. 'Tis not that Priests, or Apostles, or *Monks*, or *Hermits*, should live no longer to themselves; but that *none of us*, that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you your self know is expected from some *particular sorts* of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after *great piety*; if you neglect such devotion for any *worldly consideration*, that you may live more to your own *temper* and *taste*, more to the *fashions* and *ways* of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Obſerve farther how the ſame doctrine is taught by St. *Peter*; *As he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation.* 1 Pet. i 15.

If therefore *Claudius*, you are one of thoſe that are here called, you ſee what it is that you are called to. It is not to have ſo much religion as ſuits with your temper, your buſineſs, or your pleaſures, it is not to a particular ſort of piety, that may be ſufficient for Gentlemen of figure and eſtates; but it is *firſt*, to be *holy, as he which hath called you is holy*; *ſecondly*, it is to be *thus holy* in all manner of converſation; that is, to carry this ſpirit and degree of holineſs into every part, and thro' the whole form of your life.

And the reaſon the Apoſtle immediately gives, why this ſpirit of holineſs muſt be the common ſpirit of Chriſtians, as ſuch, is very affecting, and ſuch as equally calls upon all ſorts of Chriſtians. *Foraſmuch as ye know*, ſays he, *that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation——but with the precious blood of Chriſt*, &c.

As if he had ſaid, Foraſmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this ſtate of holineſs, enter'd into a ſociety with Chriſt, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by ſuch a myſterious inſtance of love, as infinitely exceeds every thing that can be thought of in this world; ſince God has redeemed you to himſelf, and your own happi-

neſs,

neſs, at ſo *great a price*, how baſe and ſhameful muſt it be, if you don't henceforth devote yourſelves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If therefore, *Claudius*, you conſider your *figure* and *eſtate*; or if, in the words of the text, you conſider your *gold* and *ſilver*, and the *corruptible things* of this life, as any reaſon why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of ſtrict piety and great devotion; if you think any thing in the world can be an excuſe for your not imitating the holineſs of Chriſt in the whole *courſe* and *form* of your life, you make yourſelf as guilty, as if you ſhould neglect the holineſs of Chriſtianity, for the ſake of *picking ſtraws*.

For the greatneſs of this new ſtate of life to which we are called in Chriſt Jeſus, to be for ever as the Angels of God in heaven, and the greatneſs of the *price* by which we are made capable of this ſtate of glory, has turned every thing that is *worldly*, *temporal*, and *corruptible* into an *equal littleneſs*; and made it as great baſeneſs and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Chriſt, to neglect *any degrees* of holineſs, becauſe you are a man of ſome *eſtate* and *quality*, as it would be to neglect it, becauſe you had a fancy to *pick ſtraws*.

Again; the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, *Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt which is in* 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20.

you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

How poorly therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the Scripture, how little do you know of Christianity, if you can yet talk of your *estate* and *condition*, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more *your own*, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must *mean* and *little* people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by *watching*, *fasting*, and *prayer*; but may you indulge yours in *idleness*, in *lusts* and *sensuality*, because you have so much *rent*, or such a *title* of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these?

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of *Saints*, *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, is the holiness that you are to labour after with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit; you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the Apostle saith, *You know how we exhorted, comforted and charged every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.*

1 Thess ii. 11.

You

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they requir'd of you. And yet you can't consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of the Christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you, as *walking worthy of God?* Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of Devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps; and considers how every thing he does, may be done in the spirit of holiness? And yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the Apostle does not here exhort his fellow *Apostles* and *Saints* to this holiness, but he *commands* all Christians to endeavour after it. *We charged*, says he, *every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.*

Again St. *Peter* saith, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be glorify'd in Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh, to have such regard to his words, that he appear to speak as by the direction of God? Is he

that giveth, to take care that he ſo giveth, that what he diſpoſeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorify'd in all things?

Muſt it not then be ſaid, has any man *Nobility*, *dignity* of State, or *figure* in the world? let him ſo uſe his *Nobility* or *figure* of life, that it may appear he uſes theſe as the gifts of God, for the greater ſetting forth of his Glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, any thing forc'd or far-fetch'd in this concluſion? Is it not the plain ſenſe of the words, that every thing in life is to be made a matter of holineſs unto God? If ſo, then your *eſtate* and *dignity* is ſo far from excuſing you from *great piety* and *holineſs* of life, that it lays you under a greater neceſſity of living more to the glory of God, becauſe you have more of his gifts that may be made ſerviceable to it.

For people therefore of *figure*, or *buſineſs*, or *dignity* in the world, to leave *great piety* and *eminent devotion* to any particular orders of men, or ſuch as they think have little elſe to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Chriſtianity to redeem all orders of men into *one holy* ſociety, that rich and poor, high and low, maſters and ſervants, may in one and the ſame ſpirit of piety, become a *choſen generation*, a *royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People,*

that are to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Thus much being said to shew, that *great Devotion* and Holiness is not to be left to any particular sort of people, but to be the *common spirit* of all that desire to live up to the terms of common Christianity; I now proceed to consider the nature and necessity of *universal love*, which is here recommended to be the subject of your Devotion at this hour. You are here also call'd to *Intercession*, as the most proper exercise to raise and preserve that love.

By intercession is meant a praying to God, and interceding with him for our fellow-creatures.

Our blessed Lord hath recommended his love to us, as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As therefore he is continually making intercession for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another.

A new commandment, saith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

The newness of this precept did consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of *Moses*, and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and till then unheard-of ex-

ample of love; it was to love one another, as Chriſt had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are Diſciples of Chriſt, by thus loving one another according to his new example of love, then it is certain, that if we are void of this love, we make it as plainly known unto men, that we are none of his Diſciples.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God, than an *univerſal* fervent love to all mankind *wiſhing* and *praying* for their happineſs; becauſe there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodneſs it ſelf, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happineſs.

The greateſt *Idea* that we can frame of God is, when we conceive him to be a Being of infinite love and goodneſs; uſing an infinite wiſdom and power for the common good and happineſs of all his creatures.

The higheſt notion therefore that we can form of man is, when we conceive him as like to God in this reſpect as he can be; uſing all his finite faculties, whether of wiſdom, power or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures: Heartily deſiring they may have all the happineſs they are capable of, and as many benefits and aſſiſtances from him, as his ſtate and condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And on the other hand, what a *baſeneſs* and *iniquity* is there in all inſtances of *hatred*, *envy*,

vy, ſpight and *ill-will*; if we conſider, that every inſtance of them is ſo far acting *in oppoſition* to God, and intending *miſchief* and *harm* to thoſe creatures, which God *favours*, and *protects*, and *preſerves*, in order to their happineſs? An *ill-natur'd* man amongſt God's creatures, is the moſt *perverſe* creature in the world, acting contrary to that *love*, by which himſelf *ſubſiſts*, and which alone gives ſubſiſtence to all that variety of beings, that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.

Now though this is a Doctrine of *ſtrict juſtice*, yet it is only an *univerſal love* that can comply with it. For as love is the *meaſure* of our acting towards our ſelves, ſo we can never act in the ſame manner towards other people till we look upon them with that love with which we look upon our ſelves.

As we have no degrees of ſpight, or envy, or ill-will to our ſelves, ſo we cannot be diſpos'd towards others as we are towards our ſelves, 'till we *univerſally* renounce all inſtances of ſpight, and envy, and ill-will, even in the *ſmalleſt* degrees.

If we had any imperfection in our *eyes*, that made us ſee *any one* thing wrong, for the ſame reaſon they would ſhew us an hundred things wrong.

So if we have any temper of our hearts, that makes us envious, or ſpightful, or ill-natur'd towards *any one* man, the ſame temper

per will make us envious, and ſpightful, and ill-natur'd towards a great many more.

If therefore we deſire this divine virtue of love, we muſt exerciſe and practiſe our hearts in the love of *all*, becauſe it is not *Chriſtian* love, till it is the love of *all*.

If a man could keep this whole law of love, and yet offend in *one point*, he would be guilty of all. For as one *allow'd* inſtance of injuſtice deſtroys the juſtice of all our other actions, ſo one allow'd inſtance of envy, ſpight, and ill-will, renders all our other acts of benevolence and affection nothing worth.

Acts of love that proceed not from a principle of *univerſal love*, are but like acts of juſtice, that proceed from a heart not diſpos'd to *univerſal juſtice*,

A love which is not univerſal, may indeed have *tenderneſs* and *affection*, but it hath nothing of *righteouſneſs*, or *piety* in it: it is but humour, and temper, or intereſt, or ſuch a love as *Publicans* and *Heathens* practiſe.

All particular *envies* and *ſpight*, are as plain departures from the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, as any particular acts of injuſtice. For it is as much a law of Chriſt, to treat every body as your *neighbour*, and to love you neighbour as *your ſelf*, as 'tis a law of Chriſtianity, to abſtain from *theft*.

Now the nobleſt motive to this univerſal tenderneſs and affection, is founded in this Doctrine, *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.*

Who

Who therefore, whoſe heart has any tendency towards God, would not aſpire after this divine temper, which ſo changes and exalts our nature into an union with him?

How ſhould we rejoice in the exerciſe and practice of this love, which ſo often as we feel it, is ſo often an aſſurance to us, that God is in us, that we *act* according to his ſpirit, and is love it ſelf? But we muſt obſerve, that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God, when it is ſo *pure* and *univerſal*, as to imitate that love, which God beareth to all his creatures.

God willeth the happineſs of all beings, though it is no happineſs to himſelf. Therefore we muſt deſire the happineſs of all beings though no happineſs cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all his creatures, therefore we ſhould rejoyce in thoſe perfections, where-ever we ſee them, and be as glad to have other people perfect as our ſelves.

As God forgiveth all, and giveth Grace to all, ſo we ſhould forgive all thoſe injuries and affronts with we receive from others, and do all the good that we can to them.

God almighty, beſides his own great example of love, which ought to draw all his creatures after it, has ſo provided for us, and made our happineſs ſo *common* to us all, that we have no occaſion to envy or hate one another.

For

For we cannot ſtand in one anothers way, or by enjoying any particular good, keep another from his full ſhare of it.

As we cannot be happy, but in the enjoyment of God, ſo we cannot rival, or rob one another of this happineſs.

And as to other things, the *enjoyments* and *proſperities* of this life, they are ſo little in themſelves, ſo foreign to our happineſs, and, generally ſpeaking, ſo *contrary* to that which they appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or ſpight, or hatred.

How ſilly would it be to envy a man, that was drinking poiſon out of a *golden* cup? And yet who can ſay, that he is acting wiſer than thus, when he is envying any inſtance of worldly greatneſs?

How many *ſaints* has adverſity ſent to Heaven? And how many poor ſinners has proſperity plung'd into everlaſting miſery? A man ſeems then to be in the moſt glorious ſtate, when he has conquer'd, diſgrac'd, and humbled his enemy; though it may be, that ſame conqueſt has ſav'd his adverſary, and undone himſelf.

This man had perhaps never been debauch'd, but for his *fortune* and *advancement*; *that* had never been pious, but through his *poverty* and *diſgrace*.

She that is envy'd for her beauty, may perchance owe all her *miſery* to it; and *another* may be for ever happy, for having had no admirers of her *perſon*.

One

One man ſucceeds in every thing, and ſo loſes all: *Another* meets with nothing but croſſes and diſappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This *Clergyman* may be undone by his being made a *Biſhop*; and *that* may ſave both himſelf and others, by being fix'd to his firſt *poor vicaridge*.

How envy'd was *Alexander* when conquering the world, he built *towns*, ſet up his *ſtatues*, and left marks of his glory in ſo many kingdoms!

And how deſpis'd was the poor preacher St. *Paul* when he was *beaten with rods!* And yet how ſtrangely was the world miſtaken in their judgment! How much to be envy'd was St. *Paul!* How much to be pity'd was *Alexander!*

Theſe few reflections ſufficiently ſhew us, that the different conditions of this life have nothing in them to excite our uneaſy paſſions, nothing that can reaſonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

To proceed now to another motive to this *univerſal* love.

Our power of doing *external acts* of love and goodneſs, is often very narrow and reſtrain'd. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet if our hearts are but full of love and goodneſs, we get as

it

it were an infinite power; becauſe God will attribute to us thoſe good works, thoſe acts of love, and tender charities, which we ſincerely deſir'd, and would gladly have perform'd, had it been in our power.

You cannot heal all the *ſick*, relieve all the *poor*; you cannot comfort all in diſtreſs, nor be a father to all the fatherleſs. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God.

But if there is a love and tenderneſs in your heart, that *delights* in theſe good works, and *excite*, you to do *all* that you can: If your love has *no bounds*, but continually *wiſhes* and *prays* for the relief and happineſs of all that are in diſtreſs, you will be received by God as a benefactor to thoſe, who have had nothing from you but your *good will*, and tender affections.

You cannot build *hoſpitals* for the *incurable*; you cannot erect *monaſteries* for the education of perſons in holy *ſolitude*, continual *prayer* and *mortification*; but if you join in your heart with thoſe that do, and thank God for their pious deſigns; if you are a friend to theſe great friends to mankind, and rejoyce in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a ſharer of ſuch good works as, tho' they had none of your *hands*, yet had *all* your *heart*.

This conſideration ſurely is ſufficient to make us look to, and watch over our hearts with all diligence; to ſtudy the improvement of our *inward tempers*,, and aſpire after every height

height and perfection of a loving, charitable, and benevolent mind.

And on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil and mischief of all *wrong turns* of mind, of *envy*, *spight*, *hatred*, and *ill-will*. For if the goodness of our hearts will entitle us to the reward of good actions, which we never performed; it is certain that the badness of our hearts, our envy, ill-nature, and hatred, will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

As he that lusteth after a woman shall be reckon'd an adulterer, though he has only commited the crime in his heart; so the malicious, spightful, ill natur'd man, that only *secretly* rejoices at evil, shall be reckon'd a *murderer*, though he has shed no blood.

Since therefore our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give such an exceeding extent and increase either to our virtues or vices, it is our *best* and *greatest* business to govern the motions of our hearts, to watch, correct, and improve the inward state and temper of our souls.

Now there is nothing that so much exalts our souls, as this heavenly love: it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtures, and carries them to their greatest height. Every thing that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires, and pious practices.

By

By love, I don't mean any *natural tenderneſs*, which is more or leſs in people, according to their conſtitutions; but I mean a *larger principle* of the ſoul, founded in *reaſon* and *piety*, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for his ſake.

It is this love that loves all things in God, as his creatures, as the images of his power, as the creatures of his goodneſs, as parts of his family, as members of his ſociety, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

The love therefore of our neighbour is only a branch of our love to God. For when we love God with all our hearts, and with all our ſouls, and with all our ſtrength, we ſhall neceſſarily love thoſe beings that are ſo nearly related to God, that have every thing from him, and are created by him, to be objects of his own eternal love. If I hate or deſpiſe any one man in the world, I hate ſomething that God cannot hate, and deſpiſe that which he loves.

And can I think that I love God with all my heart, whilſt I hate that which belongs only to God, which has no other maſter but him, which bears his image, is part of his family, and exiſts only by the continuance of his love towards it?

It was the impoſſibility of this that made St. *John* ſay, *That if any man ſaith, he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.*

Theſe

These reasons sufficiently shew us, that no love is *holy*, or *religious*, till it becomes *universal*.

For if Religion requires me to love all persons, as God's creatures, that belong to him, that bear his image, enjoy his protection, and make parts of his family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world; and consequently I offend against *all these reasons*, and break through all these *ties* and *obligations*, whenever I want love towards any one man. The sin therefore of hating or despising any one man, is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man, is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compassion, as being in the most pitiable condition that can be.

As it was the Sins of the World, that made the Son of God become a compassionate suffering Advocate for all mankind, so no one is of the Spirit of Christ, but he that has the *utmost compassion* for sinners. Nor is there any greater sign of your own perfection, than when

you find yourſelf all love and compaſſion towards them that are very weak and defective. And on the other hand, you have never leſs reaſon to be pleas'd with yourſelf, than when you find yourſelf moſt angry and offended at the behaviour of others. All ſin is certainly to be hated and abhorred wherever it is; but then we muſt ſet ourſelves againſt ſin, as we do againſt *ſickneſs* and *diſeaſes*, by ſhewing ourſelves tender and compaſſionate to the *ſick* and *diſeaſed*.

All other hatred of ſin, which does not fill the heart with the *ſofteſt*, *tendereſt* affections towards perſons miſerable in it, is the ſervant of ſin at the ſame time that it ſeems to be hating it.

And there is no temper which even good men ought more carefully to watch and guard againſt than this. For it is a temper that lurks and hides itſelf under the cover of many virtues, and by being unſuſpected does the more miſchief.

A man naturally fancies, that it is his own exceeding love of virtue that makes him not able to bear with thoſe that want it. And when he *abhors* one man, *diſpiſes* another, and can't bear the *name* of a third, he ſuppoſes it all to be a proof of his own *high ſenſe* of virtue, and *juſt hatred* of ſin.

And yet one would think, that a man needed no other cure for this temper, than this one reflection:

That

That if this had been the *Spirit* of the Son of God, if he had hated ſin in *this manner*, there had been no redemption of the World: That if God had hated ſinners in this manner day and night, the world itſelf had ceaſed long ago.

This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, the more improved we are ourſelves, and the higher our ſenſe of virtue is, the more we ſhall pity and compaſſionate thoſe that want it. The ſight of ſuch people will then, inſtead of raiſing in us a haughty contempt, or peeviſh indignation towards them, fill us with ſuch bowels of compaſſion, as when we ſee the miſeries of an *hoſpital*.

That the follies therefore, crimes, and ill behaviour of our fellow-creatures, may not leſſen that love and tenderneſs which we are to have for all mankind, we ſhould often conſider the reaſons on which this duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is, all mankind, not becauſe they are wiſe, holy, virtuous, or well-behav'd; for all mankind neither ever was, nor ever will be ſo; therefore it is certain, that the reaſon of our being obliged to love them, cannot be founded in their virtue.

Again; if their virtue or goodneſs were the reaſon of our being oblig'd to love people, we ſhould have no *rule* to proceed by; becauſe tho' ſome peoples virtues or vices are very no-

torious, yet, generally ſpeaking, we are but very ill judges of the virtue and merit of other people.

Thirdly, We are ſure that the virtue or merit of perſons, is not the reaſon of our being oblig'd to love them, becauſe we are commanded to pay the higheſt inſtances of love to our worſt enemies; we are to love, and bleſs, and pray for thoſe that moſt injuriouſly treat us. This therefore is demonſtration, that the merit of perſons is not the reaſon on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us farther conſider, what that love is, which we owe to our neighbour. It is to love him as ourſelves, that is, to have all thoſe ſentiments towards him, which we have towards ourſelves; to wiſh him every thing that we may lawfully wiſh to ourſelves; to be glad of every good, and ſorry for every evil that happens to him; and to be ready to do him all ſuch acts of kindneſs, as we are always ready to do to ourſelves.

This love therefore, you ſee, is nothing elſe but a love of *benevolence*; it requires nothing of us, but ſuch *good wiſhes*, *tender affections*, and ſuch acts of *kindneſs*, as we ſhew to ourſelves.

This is all the love that we owe to the beſt of men; and we are never to want any degree of this love to the worſt, or moſt unreaſonable man in the world.

Now

Now what is the reaſon why we are to love every man in this manner? It is anſwer'd, that our obligation to love all men in this manner, is founded upon many reaſons.

Firſt, Upon a reaſon of *equity*; for if it is *juſt*, to love our ſelves in this manner, it muſt be *unjuſt* to deny any degree of this love to others, becauſe every man is ſo exactly of the ſame nature, and in the ſame condition as our ſelves.

If therefore your own crimes and follies do not leſſen your obligation to ſeek your *own good*, and wiſh *well* to your ſelf; neither do the follies and crimes of your neighbour, leſſen your obligation to wiſh and ſeek the good of your neighbour.

Another reaſon for this love, is founded in the authority of God, who has commanded us to love every man as our ſelf.

Thirdly, We are oblig'd to this love, in imitation of God's goodneſs, that we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, who willeth the happineſs of all his creatures, and maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil, and on the good.

Fourthly, Our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, calleth us to the exerciſe of this love, who came from Heaven, and laid down his life, out of love to the whole ſinful world.

Fifthly, By the command of our Lord and Saviour, who has requir'd us to love one another, as he has loved us.

Theſe are the great, perpetual reaſons, on which our obligation to love all mankind as our ſelves, is founded.

Theſe reaſons never vary, or change, they always continue in their full force; and therefore equally oblige at all times, and in regard to all perſons.

God loves us, not becauſe we are wiſe, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, becauſe we want this happineſs: He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore muſt take this courſe; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their diſorders, and wiſhing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving.

It appears now plainly from what has been ſaid, that the love which we owe to our brethren, is only a love of *benevolence*. *Secondly*, That this duty of benevolence is founded upon ſuch reaſons as never vary or change; ſuch as have no dependance upon the *qualities* of perſons. From whence it follows, that it is the ſame *great ſin*, to want this love to a bad man, as to want it to a good man. Becauſe he that denies any of this benevolence to a bad man, offends againſt all the *ſame reaſons* of love, as he does that denies any benevolence to a good man: And conſequently it is the ſame ſin.

When

When therefore, you let looſe any ill-natur'd paſſion, either of hatred or contempt towards (as you ſuppoſe) an ill man, conſider what you would think of another, that was doing the ſame towards a good man, and be aſſur'd that you are committing the ſame ſin.

You will perhaps ſay, How is it poſſible to love a good and a bad man in the ſame degree?

Juſt as it's poſſible to be as *juſt* and *faithful* to a good man, as to an evil man. Now are you in any difficulty about performing *juſtice* and *faithfulneſs* to a bad Man? Are you in any doubts, whether you need be ſo *juſt* and *faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man? Now why is it, that you are in no doubt about it? 'Tis becauſe you know, that juſtice and faithfulneſs are founded upon reaſons that never *vary* or *change*, that have no dependance upon the *merits* of men, but are founded in the nature of things, in the laws of God, and therefore are to be obſerv'd with an equal exactneſs towards good and bad men.

Now do but think thus juſtly of charity, or love to your neighbour, that it is founded upon reaſons, that *vary* not, that have no dependance upon the *merits* of men, and then you will find it as poſſible to perform the ſame *exact charity*, as the ſame *exact juſtice* to all men, whether good or bad.

You will perhaps farther aſk, if you are not to have a *particular eſteem*, *veneration* and *reverence* for good men? It is anſwer'd; Yes. But then this *high eſteem* and *veneration*, is a thing very different from that love of *benevolence* which we owe to our neighbour.

The high eſteem and veneration which you have for a man of eminent piety, is no act of charity to him; it is not out of pity and compaſſion that you ſo reverence him, but it is rather an act of charity to your ſelf, that ſuch eſteem and veneration may excite you to follow his example.

You may and ought to love, like, and approve the life which the good man leads; but then this is only the loving of virtue, where-ever we ſee it. And we don't love virtue with the love of benevolence, as any thing that wants our *good wiſhes*, but as ſomething that is our proper good.

The whole of the matter is this. The *actions* which you are to *love*, *eſteem*, and *admire*, are the actions of good and pious men; but the *perſons* to whom you are to do all the good you can, in all ſorts of kindneſs and compaſſion, are all perſons, whether good or bad.

This diſtinction betwixt love of benevolence, and eſteem or veneration, is very plain and obvious. And you may perhaps ſtill better ſee the plainneſs and neceſſity of it, by this following inſtance.

No

No man is to have a *high eſteem*, or *honour* for his own accompliſhments, or behaviour; yet every man is to love himſelf, that is, to wiſh well to himſelf; therefore this diſtinction betwixt love and eſteem, is not only plain, but very neceſſary to be obſerv'd.

Again, if you think it hardly poſſible to diſlike the actions of unreaſonable men, and yet have a true love for them: Conſider this with relation to your ſelf.

It is very poſſible, I hope, for you not only to diſlike, but to *deteſt* and *abhor* a great many of your own paſt actions, and to accuſe your ſelf of *great folly* for them. But do you then loſe any of thoſe tender ſentiments towards your ſelf, which you us'd to have? Do you then ceaſe to wiſh well to your ſelf? Is not the love of your ſelf as ſtrong then, as at any other time?

Now what is thus poſſible with relation to our ſelves, is in the ſame manner poſſible with relation to others. We may have the higheſt good wiſhes towards them, deſiring for them every good that we deſire for our ſelves, and yet at the ſame time diſlike their way of life.

To proceed; all that love which we may juſtly have for our ſelves, we are in *ſtrict juſtice* oblig'd to exerciſe towards all other men; and we offend againſt the great law of our nature, and the greateſt laws of God, when our tempers towards others are different from thoſe which we have towards our ſelves.

Now

Now that *ſelf-love* which is *juſt* and *reaſonable*, keeps us conſtantly *tender*, *compaſſionate*, and *well-affected* towards our ſelves; if therefore you don't feel theſe kind diſpoſitions towards all other people, you may be aſſur'd, that you are not in that ſtate of charity, which is the very life and ſoul of chriſtian piety.

You know how it hurts you, to be made the *jeſt* and *ridicule* of other people; how it grieves you to be *robb'd* of your reputation, and *depriv'd* of the favourable opinion of your neighbours: If therefore you expoſe others to *ſcorn* and *contempt* in *any* degree; if it pleaſes you to ſee or hear of their *frailties* and *infirmities*; or if you are only *loth* to conceal their faults, you are ſo far from loving ſuch people as your ſelf, that you may be juſtly ſuppos'd to have as much hatred for them, as you have love for your ſelf. For ſuch tempers are as truly the proper fruits of hatred, as the contrary tempers are the proper fruits of love.

And as it is a certain ſign that you love your ſelf, becauſe you are tender of every thing that concerns you; ſo it is as certain a ſign that you hate your neighbour, when you are pleas'd with any thing that hurts him.

But now, if the want of a *true* and *exact charity* be ſo great a want, that, as St. *Paul* ſaith, it renders our greateſt virtues but empty ſounds, and *tinkling cymbals*, how highly does it concern us to ſtudy every art, and practiſe every method of raiſing our ſouls to this

this ſtate of charity? It is for this reaſon, that you are here deſir'd, not to let this hour of prayer paſs, without a full and ſolemn ſupplication to God, for all the inſtances of an univerſal love and benevolence to all mankind.

Such daily conſtant devotion, being the only likely means of preſerving you in ſuch a ſtate of love, as is neceſſary to prove you to be a true follower of Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the neceſſity and benefit of Interceſſion, *conſider'd as an exerciſe of univerſal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally ſuch interceſſion amends and reforms the hearts of thoſe that uſe it.*

THAT interceſſion is a great and neceſſary part of chriſtian Devotion, is very evident from Scripture.

The firſt followers of Chriſt ſeem to ſupport all their love, and to maintain all their intercourſe and correſpondence, by mutual prayers for one another.

St. *Paul*, whether he writes to churches, or particular perſons, ſhews his *interceſſion* to be perpetual for them, that they are the conſtant ſubject of his prayers.

Thus

Thus to the *Philippians*, *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.* *Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy.* Here we see, not only a continual intercession, but perform'd with so much gladness, as shews that it was an exercise of love, in which he highly rejoic'd.

Phil. i. 4, 5.

His Devotion had also the same care for particular persons; as appears by the following passage. *I thank my God, whom I serve from my fore-fathers, with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.* How holy an acquaintance and friendship was this, how worthy of persons that were rais'd above the world, and related to one another, as new members of a kingdom of heaven!

2 Tim. i. 3.

Apostles and great Saints did not only thus benefit, and bless particular Churches, and private persons; but they themselves also received graces from God by the prayers of others. Thus saith St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

2 Cor. i. 11.

This was the *antient friendship* of Christians, uniting and cementing their hearts, not by worldly considerations, or human passions, but by the mutual communication of spiritual

bleſſings, by prayers and thankſgivings to God for one another.

It was this holy interceſſion that rais'd Chriſtians to ſuch a ſtate of mutual love, as far exceeded all that had been prais'd and admir'd in human friendſhip. And when the ſame ſpirit of *interceſſion* is again in the world, when Chriſtianity has the ſame power over the hearts of people, that it then had, this holy friendſhip will be again in faſhion, and Chriſtians will be again the wonder of the world, for that exceeding love which they bear to one another.

For a *frequent* interceſſion with God, earneſtly beſeeching him to forgive the ſins of all mankind, to bleſs them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlaſting happineſs, is the divineſt exerciſe that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily therefore on your knees in a ſolemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in ſuch *forms*, with ſuch *length*, *importunity*, and *earneſtneſs*, as you uſe for yourſelf; and you will find all *little*, *ill-natur'd* paſſions dye away, your heart grow *great* and *generous*, delighting in the common happineſs of others, as you uſed only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in heaven, takes the likelieſt way to make him wiſh for, and delight in their happineſs on earth. And it is hardly poſſible

poſſible for you to beſeech and intreat God to make any one happy in the higheſt enjoyments of his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to ſee him enjoy the much ſmaller gifts of God in this ſhort and low ſtate of human life.

For how ſtrange and unnatural would it be, to pray to God to grant *health* and a *longer* life to a *ſick man*, and at the ſame time to *envy* him the poor pleaſure of *agreeable medicines?*

Yet this would be no more ſtrange, or unnatural, than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the *higheſt* degrees of his mercy and favour, and yet at the ſame time envy him the little *credit* and *figure* he hath amongſt his fellow-creatures.

When therefore you have once habituated your heart to a ſerious performance of this holy interceſſion, you have done a great deal to render it incapable of *ſpight* and *envy*, and to make it *naturally* delight in the happineſs of all mankind.

This is the natural effect of a *general interceſſion* for all mankind. But the greateſt benefits of it are then receiv'd, when it deſcends to ſuch *particular* inſtances, as our *ſtate* and *condition* in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as *neighbours* and *brethren*, as any occaſion offers; yet as we can only live in the actual ſociety of a few, and are by our ſtate and condition more particularly *related* to ſome than others; ſo

when

when our interceſſion is made an exerciſe of love and care for thoſe amongſt whom our *lot* is fallen, or who belong to us in a *nearer relation*, it then becomes the greateſt benefit to ourſelves, and produces its beſt effects in our own hearts.

If therefore you ſhould always change and alter your interceſſions, according as the *needs* and *neceſſities* of your *neighbours* or *acquaintance* ſeem to require; beſeeching God to deliver them from ſuch or ſuch particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift, or bleſſing; ſuch interceſſions, beſides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as diſpoſing you to every other good office, and to the exerciſe of every other virtue towards ſuch perſons, as have ſo often a place in your prayers.

This would make it pleaſant to you to be *courteous*, *civil*, and *condeſcending* to all about you; and make you unable to ſay, or do a rude, or hard thing to thoſe, for whom you had uſed yourſelf to be ſo kind and compaſſionate in your prayers.

For there is nothing that makes us love a man ſo much, as praying for him; and when you can once do this ſincerely for any man, you have fitted your ſoul for the performance of every thing that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generoſity and tenderneſs, that will give you a better and ſweeter behaviour, than any thing that is called *fine breeding*, and *good manners*.

By

By conſidering yourſelf as an advocate with God for your neighbours and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourſelf. It would be eaſy to you to bear with, and forgive thoſe, for whom you particularly implor'd the divine mercy and forgiveneſs.

Such prayers as theſe amongſt *neighbours* and *acquaintance*, would unite them to one another in the ſtrongeſt bonds of love and tenderneſs. It would exalt and ennoble their ſouls, and teach them to conſider one another in a higher ſtate, as members of a *ſpiritual ſociety*, that are created for the enjoyment of the common bleſſings of God, and fellow-heirs of the ſame future glory.

And by being thus deſirous, that every one ſhould have their full ſhare of the favours of God, they would not only be content, but glad to ſee one another happy in the little enjoyments of this tranſitory life.

Theſe would be the natural effects of ſuch an interceſſion amongſt people of the ſame *town* or *neighbourhood*, or that were acquainted with one another's *ſtate* and *condition*.

Ouranius is a holy Prieſt, full of the ſpirit of the Goſpel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor *country village*. Every ſoul in it is as dear to him as himſelf; and he loves them all, as he loves himſelf; becauſe he *prays* for them all, as often as he prays for himſelf.

If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfy'd with any degrees of care and watchfulness, 'tis because he has learn'd the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an *intercessor* for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*.

He goes about his Parish, and visits every body in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them; he visits them to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may *intercede* with God for them, according to their *particular necessities*.

When *Ouranius* first entred into holy orders, he had a *haughtiness* in his temper, a great *contempt* and *disregard* for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has *pray'd away* this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those *prayers* that he makes for their repentance.

The *rudeness*, *ill-nature*, or *perverse* behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises

no other paſſion in him, than a deſire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his *prayers* for others, *alter'd* and *amended* the ſtate of his own heart.

It would ſtrangely delight you to ſee with what *ſpirit* he converſes, with what *tenderneſs* he reproves, with what *affection* he exhorts, and with what *vigour* he preaches; and 'tis all owing to this, becauſe he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to thoſe, for whom he firſt *prays* to God.

This devotion ſoftens his heart, enlightens his mind, ſweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him, inſtructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his firſt coming to his little *Village*, it was as diſagreeable to him as a *priſon*, and every day ſeem'd too tedious to be endured in ſo retir'd a place. He thought his Pariſh was too full of *poor* and *mean* people, that were none of them fit for the converſation of a *Gentleman*.

This put him upon a cloſe application to his ſtudies. He kept much at home, writ *notes* upon *Homer* and *Plautus*, and ſometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was juſt in the midſt of one of *Homer*'s *battles*.

This was his *polite*, or I may rather ſay, *poor*, *ignorant* turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are ſo far from being tedious, or his Pariſh too great a retirement, that

that he now only wants more time to do that variety of good which his ſoul thirſts after. The ſolitude of his little Pariſh is become matter of great comfort to him, becauſe he hopes that God has plac'd him and his flock there, to make it their way to heaven.

He can now not only converſe with, but gladly attend and *wait* upon the pooreſt kind of people. He is now daily watching over the *weak* and *infirm*, humbling himſelf to perverſe, rude, ignorant people, where-ever he can find them; and is ſo far from deſiring to be conſidered as a *Gentleman*, that he deſires to be uſed as the *ſervant* of all; and in the ſpirit of his Lord and Maſter *girds himſelf*, and is glad to *kneel down* and *waſh* any of their *feet*.

He now thinks the pooreſt creature in his Pariſh good enough, and great enough, to deſerve the humbleſt attendances, the kindeſt friendſhips, the tendereſt offices, he can poſſibly ſhew them.

He is ſo far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better converſation in the world, than to be talking with *poor* and *mean* people about the kingdom of heaven.

All theſe noble thoughts and divine ſentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he preſents every one ſo often before God in his prayers, that he never thinks he can *eſteem*, *reverence*, or *ſerve* thoſe enough, for whom he implores ſo many mercies from God.

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of holy Scripture, *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Jam. v. 16.

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for antient, poor people to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works, may *pierce the clouds*, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto *Abimelech* concerning *Abraham*, *He is a Prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* Gen xx. 7.

And again, how he said of *Job*, *And my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept.* Job xlii. 8.

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, through their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceeding studious of christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways, fearful

ful of every error and defect in his life, leſt his prayers for his flock ſhould be leſs availing with God, through his own defects in holineſs.

This makes him careful of every *temper* of his heart, give *alms* of all that he hath, *watch*, and *faſt*, and *mortify*, and live according to the ſtricteſt rules of *temperance*, *meekneſs*, and *humility*, that he may be in ſome degree like an *Abraham*, or a *Job* in his Pariſh, and make ſuch prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

Theſe are the happy effects, which a *devout interceſſion* hath produc'd in the life of *Ouranius*.

And if other people in their ſeveral ſtations, were to imitate this example, in ſuch a manner as ſuited their particular ſtate of life, they would certainly find the ſame happy effects from it.

If *Maſters*, for inſtance, were thus to remember their *ſervants* in their prayers, beſeeching God to bleſs them, and ſuiting their petitions to the particular wants and neceſſities of their ſervants; letting no day paſs, without a *full performance* of this part of Devotion, the benefit would be as great to themſelves, as to their ſervants.

No way ſo likely as this, to inſpire them with a true ſenſe of that power which they have in their hands, to make them delight in doing good, and becoming exemplary in all the parts of a wiſe and good maſter.

The preſenting their ſervants ſo often before God, as equally related to God, and entitled to the ſame expectations of Heaven, as themſelves, would naturally incline them to treat them, not only with ſuch *humanity* as became *fellow-creatures*, but with ſuch *tenderneſs*, *care*, and *generoſity*, as became *fellow-heirs* of the ſame glory. This Devotion would make maſters inclin'd to every thing that was good towards their ſervants; be watchful of their behaviour, and as ready to require of them an exact obſervance of the duties of Chriſtianity, as of the duties of their ſervice.

This would teach them to conſider their ſervants as God's ſervants, to deſire their perfection, to do nothing before them that might corrupt their minds, to impoſe no buſineſs upon them that ſhould leſſen their ſenſe of Religion, or hinder them from their full ſhare of Devotion, both publick and private. This praying for them, would make them as glad to ſee their ſervants eminent in piety as themſelves, and contrive that they ſhould have all the opportunities and encouragements, both to know and perform all the duties of the chriſtian life.

How natural would it be for ſuch a Maſter, to perform every part of Family-Devotion; to have conſtant prayers, to excuſe no ones abſence from them; to have the Scriptures, and books of piety often read amongſt his ſervants; to take all opportunities of inſtructing

ſtructing them, of raiſing their minds to God, and teaching them to do all their buſineſs, as a ſervice to God, and upon the hopes and expectations of another life?

How natural would it be for ſuch a one to pity their weakneſs and ignorance, to bear with the dulneſs of their underſtandings, or the perverſeneſs of their tempers; to reprove them with tenderneſs, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them?

How impoſſible would it be for a Maſter, that thus interceded with God for his ſervants, to uſe any unkind threatnings towards them, to damn and curſe them as *dogs* and ſcoundrels, and treat them only as the dregs of the creation.

This Devotion would give them another ſpirit, and make them conſider how to make proper returns of care, kindneſs, and protection to thoſe, who had ſpent their ſtrength and time in ſervice and attendance upon them.

Now if *Gentlemen* think it too low an employment for their ſtate and dignity, to exerciſe ſuch a Devotion as this for their *ſervants*, let them conſider how far they are from the ſpirit of Chriſt, who made himſelf not only an interceſſor, but a ſacrifice for the whole race of ſinful mankind.

Let them conſider how miſerable their greatneſs would be, if the Son of God ſhould think it as much below him to pray for them,

as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures.

Let them conſider how far they are from that ſpirit, which prays for its moſt unjuſt enemies, if they have not kindneſs enough to pray for thoſe, by whoſe labours and ſervice they live in eaſe themſelves.

Again, if *Parents* ſhould thus make themſelves *advocates* and *interceſſors* with God for their children, conſtantly applying to Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely, not only to bleſs their children, but alſo to form and diſpoſe their own minds to the performance of every thing that was excellent and praiſe-worthy.

I don't ſuppoſe, but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers, and call upon God to bleſs them. But the thing here intended, is not a general remembrance of them, but a *regular method* of recommending all their *particular needs* and *neceſſities* unto God; and of praying for every ſuch particular *grace* and *virtue* for them, as their *ſtate* and *condition* of life ſhall ſeem to require.

The ſtate of parents is a holy ſtate, in ſome degree like that of the Prieſthood, and calls upon them to bleſs their children with their prayers and ſacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy *Job* watch'd over, and bleſſed his children, he *ſanctify'd them, he roſe up early in the morning, and offer'd*

Job i. 5.

fer'd burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all.

If Parents therefore, conſidering themſelves in this light, ſhould be daily calling upon God in a *ſolemn*, *deliberate* manner, *altering* and *extending* their interceſſions, as the *ſtate* and *growth* of their children requir'd, ſuch Devotion would have a mighty influence upon the reſt of their lives; it would make them very circumſpect in the government of themſelves; prudent and careful of every thing they ſaid or did, leſt their example ſhould hinder that, which they ſo conſtantly deſir'd in their prayers.

If a father was daily making particular prayers to God, that he would pleaſe to inſpire his children with *true piety*, *great humility*, and *ſtrict temperance*, what could be more likely to make the father himſelf become exemplary in theſe virtues? How naturally would he grow aſham'd of wanting ſuch virtues, as he thought neceſſary for his children? So that his prayers for their piety, would be a certain means of exalting his own to its greateſt height.

If a father thus conſider'd himſelf as an interceſſor with God for his children, to bleſs them with his prayers, what more likely means to make him aſpire after every degree of holineſs, that he might thereby be fitter to obtain bleſſings from Heaven for them? How would ſuch thoughts make him avoid every thing that was ſinful and diſpleaſing to God,

God, leſt when he pray'd for his children, God ſhould reject his prayers?

How tenderly, how religiouſly would ſuch a father converſe with his children, whom he conſider'd as his little ſpiritual flock, whoſe virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his authority, nouriſh by his counſel, and proſper by his prayers to God for them?

How fearful would he be of all greedy and unjuſt ways of raiſing their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, leſt he ſhould thereby render them incapable of thoſe graces, which he was ſo often beſeeching God to grant them?

Theſe being the plain, natural, happy effects of this interceſſion, all parents, I hope, who have the real welfare of their children at heart, who deſire to be their true friends and benefactors, and to live amongſt them in the ſpirit of wiſdom and piety, will not neglect ſo great a means, both of raiſing their own virtue, and doing an eternal good to thoſe, who are ſo near and dear to them, by the ſtrongeſt ties of nature.

Laſtly, If all people, when they feel the firſt approaches of *reſentment*, *envy*, or *contempt*, towards others; or if in all little diſagreements, and miſunderſtandings whatever, they ſhould, inſtead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourſe at ſuch times to a more particular and extraordinary

dinary interceſſion with God, for ſuch perſons as had rais'd their envy, reſentment, or diſcontent; this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you was alſo to form your prayer, or interceſſion at that time, to the greateſt degree of *contrariety* to that temper which you was then in, it would be an excellent means of raiſing your heart to the greateſt ſtate of perfection.

As for inſtance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of *envy* towards any perſon, whether on account of his *riches*, *power*, *reputation*, *learning*, or *advancement*, if you ſhould immediately betake your ſelf at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bleſs and proſper him in that *very thing*, which rais'd your envy; if you ſhould expreſs and repeat your petitions in the ſtrongeſt terms, beſeeching God to grant him all the happineſs from the enjoyment of it, that can poſſibly be receiv'd, you would ſoon find it to be the beſt antidote in the world, to expel the venom of that poiſonous paſſion.

This would be ſuch a triumph over your ſelf, would ſo humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the ſame manner, when he ſaw the temptation turn'd into ſo great a means of amending and reforming the ſtate of your heart.

Again,

Again, If in any little difference or miſunderſtandings that you happen'd to have at any time with a *relation*, a *neighbour*, or any one elſe, you ſhould then pray for them in a more *extraordinary manner*, than you ever did before; beſeeching God to give them every grace, and bleſſing, and happineſs you can think of, you would have taken the ſpeedieſt method that can be, of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all miſunderſtandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven; ſtay for no condeſcenſions, need no meditation of a third perſon, but be glad to teſtify your love and good-will to him, who had ſo high a place in your ſecret prayers.

This would be the mighty power of ſuch Chriſtian devotion; it would remove all peeviſh paſſions, ſoften your heart into the moſt tender condeſcenſions, and be the beſt arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

The greateſt reſentments amongſt friends and neighbours moſt often ariſe from poor *punctilio's*, and *little miſtakes* in conduct. A certain ſign that their friendſhip is *merely human*, not founded upon religious conſiderations, or ſupported by ſuch a courſe of mutual prayer for one another, as the firſt Chriſtians uſed.

For ſuch devotion muſt neceſſarily either deſtroy ſuch tempers, or be itſelf deſtroyed by them.

You cannot poſſibly have any ill temper, or ſhew any unkind behaviour to a man, for whoſe welfare you are ſo much concerned, as to be his advocate with God in private.

Hence we may alſo learn the odious nature and exceeding guilt of all *ſpight*, *hatred*, *contempt*, and *angry paſſions*; they are not to be conſider'd as defects in *good nature*, and *ſweetneſs* of temper, not as failings in *civility* of manners, or *good breeding*, but as ſuch *baſe tempers* as are entirely inconſiſtent with the *charity* of interceſſion.

You think it a ſmall matter to be *peeviſh* or *ill-natur'd* to ſuch or ſuch a man; but you ſhould conſider whether it be a ſmall matter to do that, which you could not do, if you had but ſo much charity as to be able to recommend him to God in your prayers.

You think it a ſmall matter to *ridicule* one man, and *deſpiſe* another; but you ſhould conſider, whether it be a ſmall matter to want that charity towards theſe people, which Chriſtians are not allowed to want towards their moſt inveterate enemies.

For be but as charitable to theſe men, do but *bleſs* and *pray* for them, as you are oblig'd to bleſs and pray for your *enemies*, and then you will find that you have charity enough, to make it impoſſible for you to treat them with any degree of ſcorn or contempt.

For you cannot poſſibly deſpiſe and ridicule that man, whom your *private prayers* recommend to the love and favour of God.

When

When you deſpiſe and ridicule a man, it is with no other end, but to make him ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other men, and in order to prevent their eſteem of him. How therefore can it be poſſible for you ſincerely to beſeech God to bleſs that man with the *honour* of his love and favour, whom you deſire men to treat as worthy of their *contempt?*

Could you out of love to a neighbour, deſire your *Prince* to honour him with every mark of his eſteem and favour, and yet at the ſame time expoſe him to the ſcorn and deriſion of your own ſervants?

Yet this is as poſſible, as to expoſe that man to the ſcorn and contempt of your fellow-creatures, whom you recommend to the favour of God in your ſecret prayers.

From theſe conſiderations we may plainly diſcover the reaſonableneſs and juſtice of this doctrine of the Goſpel, *Whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his brother, Racha, ſhall be in danger of the council; but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell fire.*

Matth. v. 22.

We are not, I ſuppoſe, to believe that every haſty word, or unreaſonable expreſſion, that ſlips from us by *chance*, or *ſurprize*, and is contrary to our intention and *tempers*, is the great ſin here ſignified.

But he that ſays, *Racha*, or thou *fool*, muſt chiefly mean him that allows himſelf in *deliberate, deſign'd* acts of *ſcorn* and *contempt* towards

wards his brother, and in that temper ſpeaks to him, and of him, in reproachful language.

Now ſince it appears, that theſe tempers are at the bottom the moſt *rank uncharitableneſs*, ſince no one can be guilty of them, but becauſe he has not charity enough to pray to God for his brother; it cannot be thought hard, or rigorous juſtice, that ſuch tempers ſhould endanger the ſalvation of Chriſtians. For who would think it hard, that a Chriſtian cannot obtain the favour of God for himſelf, unleſs he reverence and eſteem his brother Chriſtian, as one that bears the image of God, as one for whom Chriſt dy'd, as a member of Chriſt's body, as a member of that holy ſociety on earth, which is in union with that triumphant Church in heaven?

Yet all theſe conſiderations muſt be forgot, all theſe glorious privileges diſregarded, before a man can treat him that has them, as an object of ſcorn and contempt.

So that to ſcorn, or deſpiſe a brother, or, as our bleſſed Lord ſays, to call him *Racha*, or *fool*, muſt be look'd upon, as amongſt the moſt odious, unjuſt, and guilty tempers, that can be ſupported in the heart of a Chriſtian, and juſtly excluding him from all his hopes in the ſalvation of Jeſus Chriſt.

For to deſpiſe one for whom Chriſt dy'd, is to be as contrary to Chriſt, as he that deſpiſes any thing that Chriſt has ſaid, or done.

If a Chriſtian that had liv'd with the holy Virgin *Mary*, ſhould, after the death of our Lord,

Lord, have taken any occaſion to treat her with contempt, you would certainly ſay, that he had loſt his piety towards our bleſſed Lord. For a true reverence for Chriſt muſt have forced him to treat her with reſpect, who was ſo nearly related to him.

I dare appeal to any man's mind, whether it does not tell him, that this relation of the Virgin *Mary* to our bleſſed Lord, muſt have obliged all thoſe that lived and convers'd with her, to treat her with great reſpect and eſteem. Might not a man have juſtly dreaded the vengeance of God upon him, for any ſcorn or contempt that he had ſhewn to her?

Now if this be plain and obvious reaſoning, if a contempt offer'd to the Virgin *Mary* muſt have been interpreted a contempt of Chriſt, becauſe of her near relation to him, then let the ſame reaſoning ſhew you the great impiety of deſpiſing any brother.

You cannot deſpiſe a brother, without deſpiſing him that ſtands in a *high relation* to God, to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and to the holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a *writing* with great contempt, that had been written by the *finger* of God; and can you think it a leſs impiety to contemn and vilify a brother, who is not only the *workmanſhip*, but the *image* of God?

You would juſtly think it great prophaneneſs to contemn and trample upon an *Altar*, becauſe it was appropriated to holy uſes, and

had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less prophaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother, who so belongs to God, that his very body is to be considered as the *temple of the Holy Ghost?* 1 Cor. vi. 15.

Had you despis'd and ill-treated the Virgin *Mary*, you had been chargeable with the impiety of despising her, of whom Christ was born, And if you scorn and despise a brother, you are chargeable with the impiety of despising him, for whom Christ laid down his life.

And now if this scornful temper is founded upon a disregard of all these relations, which every Christian bears to God, and Christ, and the Holy Trinity, can you wonder, or think it hard, that a Christian who thus allows himself to despise a brother, should be in danger of hell fire?

Secondly, It must here be observed, that tho' in these words, *whosoever shall say, Thou fool*, &c. the *great sin* there condemned is an *allowed temper* of despising a brother; yet we are also to believe, that all *hasty expressions*, and words of *contempt*, tho' spoken by *surprize* or *accident*, are by this text condemned as great sins, and notorious breaches of Christian charity.

They proceed from great want of Christian love and meekness, and call for great repentance. They are only little sins, when compar'd with *habits* and *settled tempers* of treating

ing a brother deſpightfully, and fall as directly under the comdemnation of this text, as the groſſeſt habits of uncharitableneſs.

And the reaſon why we are always to apprehend great guilt, and call ourſelves to a ſtrict repentance for theſe haſty expreſſions of anger and contempt, is this; becauſe they ſeldom are what they ſeem to be, that is, *mere ſtarts* of temper, that were occaſion'd *purely* by *ſurprize* or *accident*, but are much more our own proper acts, than we generally imagine.

A man ſays a great many bitter things; he preſently forgives himſelf, becauſe he ſuppoſes it was only the *ſuddenneſs* of the occaſion, or ſomething *accidental*, that carry'd him ſo far beyond himſelf.

But he ſhould conſider, that perhaps the *accident*, or *ſurprize*, was not the occaſion of his angry expreſſions, but might only be the occaſion of his angry temper ſhewing it ſelf.

Now as this is, generally ſpeaking, the caſe, as all *haughty*, *angry* language generally proceeds from ſome *ſecret habits* of pride in the heart; ſo people that are ſubject to it, tho' only now and then as accidents happen, have great reaſon to repent of more than their preſent behaviour, to charge themſelves with greater guilt than accidental paſſion, and to bring themſelves to ſuch penance and mortification, as is proper to deſtroy *habits* of a haughty ſpirit.

And

And this may be the reaſon, why the text looks no farther than the outward language; why it only ſays, *Whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool*; becauſe few can proceed ſo far, as to the accidental uſe of *haughty diſdainful* language, but they whoſe hearts are more or leſs poſſeſs'd with *habits* and *ſettled tempers* of pride and haughtineſs.

But to return, *Interceſſion* is not only the beſt arbitrator of all differences, the beſt promoter of true friendſhip, the beſt cure and preſervative againſt all unkind tempers, all angry and haughty paſſions, but is alſo of great uſe to diſcover to us the true ſtate of our own hearts,

There are many tempers which we think *lawful* and *innocent*, which we never ſuſpect of any harm? which, if they were to be try'd by this devotion, would ſoon ſhew us how we have deceiv'd our ſelves.

Suſurrus is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more conſtant at the ſervice of the Church, or whoſe heart is more affected with it. His charity is ſo great, that he almoſt ſtarves himſelf, to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

Yet *Suſurrus* had a prodigious failing along with theſe great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and diſcover all the defects and Infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him any thing of any body, provided that you did

not do it in the *ſtile* of an enemy. He never diſliked an *evil-ſpeaker*, but when his language was *rough* and *paſſionate*. If you would but whiſper any thing gently, though it was ever ſo bad in it ſelf, *Suſurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he viſits, you generally hear him relating, how ſorry he is for the defects and failings of ſuch a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loth to ſay that which he is forc'd to ſay; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be conceal'd.

Suſurrus had ſuch a tender, compaſſionate manner of relating things the moſt prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even ſeem'd, both to himſelf and others, to be exerciſing a chriſtian charity, at the ſame time that he was indulging a whiſpering, evil-ſpeaking temper.

Suſurrus once whiſper'd to a particular friend in great ſecrecy, ſomething too bad to be ſpoke of publickly. He ended with ſaying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had ſome hopes it might not be true, though the ſuſpicions were very ſtrong. His friend made him this reply:

You ſay, *Suſurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have ſome hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your *cloſet*, and pray to God for this man, in ſuch a manner, and with ſuch

earneſt

earneſtneſs as you would pray for your ſelf on the like occaſion.

Beſeech God to interpoſe in his favour, to ſave him from falſe accuſers, and bring all thoſe to ſhame, who by *uncharitable whiſpers*, and *ſecret ſtories*, wound him, like thoſe that ſtab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer, then you may, if you pleaſe, go tell the ſame ſecret to ſome other friend, that you have told to me.

Suſurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conſcience in as lively a manner, as if he had ſeen the *books open'd* at the day of Judgment.

All other arguments might have been reſiſted; but it was impoſſible for *Suſurrus* either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally ſelf-condemn'd in the higheſt degree.

From that time, to this, he has conſtantly us'd himſelf to this method of interceſſion; and his heart is ſo entirely chang'd by it, that he can now no more privately whiſper any thing to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whiſperings and evil-ſpeakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curſes; and he has appointed one day in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himſelf before God, in the ſorrowful confeſſion of his former guilt.

It may well be wonder'd, how a man of ſo much piety as *Suſurrus*, could be ſo long deceiv'd in himſelf, as to live in ſuch a ſtate of *ſcandal* and *evil-ſpeaking*, without ſuſpecting himſelf to be guilty of it. But it was the *tenderneſs* and ſeeming *compaſſion* with which he heard and related every thing, that deceiv'd both himſelf and others.

This was a falſeneſs of heart, which was only to be fully diſcover'd, by the true *charity* of *interceſſion*.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themſelves, as *Suſurrus* did, were often to try their ſpirit by ſuch an *interceſſion*, they would often find themſelves to be ſuch, as they leaſt of all ſuſpected.

I have laid before you, the many and great advantages of *interceſſion*. You have ſeen what a divine friendſhip it muſt needs beget amongſt Chriſtians, how dear it would render all relations and neighbours to one another; how it tends to make *Clergymen*, *Maſters*, and *Parents* exemplary and perfect in all the duties of their ſtation; how certainly it deſtroys all envy, ſpight, and ill natur'd paſſions; how ſpeedily it reconciles all differences, and with what a piercing light it diſcovers to a man the true ſtate of his heart.

Theſe conſiderations will, I hope, perſuade you to make ſuch interceſſion as is proper for your ſtate, the *conſtant*, *chief* matter of your devotion at this hour of prayer.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Recommending Devotion at three o'clock, call'd in Scripture the ninth hour *of the day. The subject of prayer at this hour, is* resignation *to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God in all our actions and designs.*

I Have recommended certain subjects to be made the fix'd and chief matter of your Devotions, at all the hours of prayer that have been already consider'd.

As *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of your self to God, at your first prayers in the morning. At *nine*, the great virtue of Christian *humility* is to be the chief part of your petitions; at *twelve*, you are call'd upon to pray for all the graces of *universal love*, and to raise it in your heart by such general and particular *intercessions*, as your own state, and relation to other people, seem more particularly to require of you.

At this *hour* of the afternoon, you are desir'd to consider the necessity of *resignation* and *conformity* to the will of God, and to make this great virtue the principal matter of your prayers.

There is nothing *wise*, or *holy*, or *just*, but the *great will* of God. This is as strictly true

in the moſt rigid ſenſe, as to ſay, that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings therefore, whether in Heaven, or on earth, can be wiſe, or holy, or juſt, but ſo far as they conform to *this will* of God. It is conformity to this will, that gives virtue and perfection to the higheſt ſervices of angels in Heaven; and it is conformity to the ſame will, that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth, become an acceptable ſervice unto God.

The whole nature of virtue conſiſts in conforming, and the whole nature of vice in declining from the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil his will; the *Sun* and *Moon* obey his will, by the neceſſity of their nature; *Angels* conform to his will, by the perfection of their nature: If therefore you would ſhew your ſelf not to be a *rebel* and *apoſtate* from the order of the creation, you muſt act like beings both above and below you; it muſt be the great deſire of your ſoul, that God's will may be done by you on earth, as it is done in heaven. It muſt be the ſettled purpoſe and intention of your heart, to *will* nothing, *deſign* nothing, *do* nothing, but ſo far as you have reaſon to believe, that it is the will of God, that you ſhould ſo deſire, deſign and do.

'Tis as juſt and neceſſary to live in this ſtate of heart, to think thus of God and your ſelf, as to think that you have any dependance upon him. And it is as great a rebellion

lion againſt God, to think that your will may ever differ from his, as to think that you have not receiv'd the power of *willing* from him.

Your are therefore to conſider your ſelf as a being, that has no other buſineſs in the world, but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own, to ſeek no ſelf-deſigns, or ſelf ends, but to fill ſome *place*, and act ſome *part* in ſtrict conformity, and thankful reſignation to the divine pleaſure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own diſpoſal, is as abſurd as to think that you created, and can preſerve your ſelf. It is as plain and neceſſary a firſt principle, to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to him, and are to act and ſuffer all in a thankful reſignation to his pleaſure, as to believe, that in him you *live, and move, and have your being*.

Reſignation to the divine will, ſignifies a chearful approbation, and thankful acceptance of every thing that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to ſubmit, but we muſt thankfully receive, and fully approve of every thing, that by the order of God's providence happens to us.

For there is no reaſon why we ſhould be patient, but what is as good and ſtrong a reaſon why we ſhould be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wiſe and good *Phyſician*, that could not miſtake, or do any thing to us, but what certainly tended to our benefit;

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it would not be enough to be patient, and abſtain from murmurings againſt ſuch a Phyſician: but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him, not to be pleas'd and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him.

Now this is our true ſtate with relation to God; we can't be ſaid ſo much as to *believe* in him, unleſs we believe him to be of *infinite wiſdom*. Every argument therefore for patience under his diſpoſal of us, is as ſtrong an argument for approbation and thankfulneſs for every thing that he does to us. And there needs no more to diſpoſe us to this gratitude towards God, than a full belief in him, that he is this being of infinite wiſdom, love and goodneſs.

Do but aſſent to this truth, in the ſame manner as you aſſent to things of which you have no doubt, and then you will chearfully approve of every thing, that God has already approv'd for you.

For as you cannot poſſibly be pleas'd with the behaviour of any perſon towards you, but becauſe it is for your good, is wiſe in it ſelf, and the effect of his love and goodneſs towards you; ſo when you are ſatisfy'd that God does not only do that which is wiſe, and good, and kind, but that which is the effect of an infinite wiſdom and love in the care of you; it will be as neceſſary, whilſt you have this faith, to be thankful and pleas'd with

every

every thing which God chuſes for you, as to wiſh your own happineſs.

Whenever therefore you find your ſelf diſpos'd to *uneaſineſs*, or *murmuring* at any thing that is the effect of God's providence over you, you muſt look upon your ſelf as *denying* either the wiſdom or goodneſs of God. For every complaint neceſſarily ſuppoſes this. You would never complain of your *neighbour*, but that you ſuppoſe you can ſhew either his *unwiſe*, *unjuſt*, or *unkind* behaviour towards you.

Now every murmuring, impatient reflection under the providence of God, is the ſame accuſation of God. A complaint always ſuppoſes *ill uſage*.

Hence alſo you may ſee the great neceſſity and piety of this thankful ſtate of heart, becauſe the want of it implies an accuſation of God's want either of wiſdom, or goodneſs, in his diſpoſal of us. It is not therefore any high degree of perfection, founded in any uncommon *nicety* of thinking, or *refin'd notions*, but a plain principle, founded in this plain belief, that God is a being of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs.

Now this reſignation to the divine will, may be conſider'd in two reſpects; *Firſt*, As is ſignifies a thankful approbation of God's *general* providence over the world: *Secondly*, As it ſignifies a thankful acceptance of his *particular* providence over us.

Firſt,

Firſt, Every man is by the law of his creation, by the firſt article of his creed, oblig'd to conſent to, and acknowledge the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, in his *general providence* over the whole world. He is to believe that it is the effect of God's great wiſdom and goodneſs, that the world it ſelf was form'd at ſuch a particular time, and in ſuch a manner. That the general order of nature, the whole frame of things, is contriv'd and form'd in the beſt mnnner. He is to believe that God's providence over ſtates and kingdoms, times and ſeaſons, is all for the beſt. That the revolutions of ſtate and changes, of empire, the riſe and fall of monarchies perſecutions, wars, famines, and plagues, are all permitted, and conducted by God's providence, to the general good of man in this ſtate of trial.

A good man is to believe all this, with the ſame fulneſs of aſſent, as he believes that God is in every place, though he neither ſees, nor can comprehend the manner of his preſence.

This is a noble magnificence of thought, a true religious greatneſs of mind, to be thus affected with God's general providence, admiring and magnifying his wiſdom in all things; never murmuring at the courſe of the world, or the ſtate of things, but looking upon all around, at heaven and earth, as a pleas'd ſpectator; and adoring that inviſible hand, which gives laws to all motions, and overrules

rules all events to ends ſuitable to the higheſt wiſdom and goodneſs.

It is very common for people to allow themſelves great liberty in finding fault with ſuch things, as have only God for their cauſe.

Every one thinks he may juſtly ſay, what a *wretched*, *abominable climate* he lives in. This man is frequently telling you what a *diſmal*, *curſed* day it is, and what intolerable *ſeaſons* we have. Another thinks he has very little to thank God for, that it is hardly worth his while to live in a world ſo full of changes and revolutions. But theſe are tempers of great impiety, and ſhew that religion has not yet its ſeat in the heart of thoſe that have them.

It ſounds indeed much better to murmur at the courſe of the world, or the ſtate of things, then to murmur at providence; to complain of the ſeaſons and weather, than to complain of God; but if theſe have no other cauſe but God and his providence, it is a poor diſtinction to ſay, that you are only angry at the things, but not at the cauſe and director of them.

How *ſacred* the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be conſider'd as God's, and referr'd to him, is fully taught by our bleſſed Lord in the caſe of *oaths: But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;* Matth. v. 37. *nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool; neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great*

King; neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black; that is, becauſe the whiteneſs or blackneſs of thy hair is not thine, but God's.

Here you ſee all things in the whole order of nature, from the higheſt heavens to the ſmalleſt hair, are always to be conſidered, not ſeparately as they are in themſelves, but as in ſome relation to God. And if this be good reaſoning, thou ſhalt not ſwear by the *earth*, a *city*, or thy *hair*, becauſe theſe things are God's, and in a certain manner belong to him; is it not exactly the ſame reaſoning to ſay, Thou ſhalt not murmur at the *ſeaſons* of the earth, the *ſtates* of cities, and the change of *times*, becauſe all theſe things are in the hands of God, have him for their Author, are directed and governed by him to ſuch ends, as are moſt ſuitable to his wiſe Providence?

If you think you can murmur at the ſtate of things, without murmuring at Providence, or complain of ſeaſons without complaining of God; hear what our bleſſed Lord ſays farther upon oaths: *Whoſo ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon: and whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by him that dwelleth therein: and he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon.*

Mat. xxiii. 20.

Now does not this Scripture plainly oblige us to reaſon after this manner: Whoſo murmurs at the courſe of the world, murmurs at God

God that governs the courſe of the world. Whoſo repines at *ſeaſons* and *weather*, and ſpeaks impatiently of times and events, repines and ſpeaketh impatiently of God, who is the ſole Lord and Governor of *times*, *ſeaſons*, and *events*.

As therefore when we think of God himſelf we are to have no ſentiments but of praiſe and thankſgiving; ſo when we look at thoſe things which are under the direction of God, and govern'd by his Providence, we are to receive them with the ſame tempers of praiſe and gratitude.

And though we are not to think all things right, and juſt, and lawful, which the Providence of God permits; for then nothing could be unjuſt, becauſe nothing without his permiſſion: yet we muſt adore God in the greateſt publick calamities, the moſt grievous perſecutions, as things that are ſuffer'd by God, like *plagues* and *famines*, for ends ſuitable to his wiſdom and glory in the government of the world.

There is nothing more ſuitable to the piety of a reaſonable creature, or the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, than thus to approve, admire, and glorify God in all the acts of his general Providence: conſidering the whole world as his particular family, and all events as directed by his wiſdom,

Every one ſeems to conſent to this, as an undeniable truth, *That all things muſt be as God pleaſes*; and is not this enough to make every

every man pleas'd with them himſelf? And how can a man be a peeviſh complainer of any thing that is the effect of Providence, but by ſhewing that his own *ſelf-will* and *ſelf-wiſdom* is of more weight with him, than the will and wiſdom of God? And what can Religion be ſaid to have done for a man, whoſe heart is in this ſtate?

For if he cannot thank and praiſe God, as well in calamities and ſufferings, as in proſperity and happineſs, he is as far from the piety of a Chriſtian, as he that only loves them that love him, is from the charity of a Chriſtian. For to thank God only for ſuch things as you like, is no more a proper act of piety, than to believe only what you ſee, is an act of faith.

Reſignation and thankſgiving to God are only acts of piety, when they are acts of *faith*, *truſt* and *confidence* in the divine Goodneſs.

The faith of *Abraham* was an act of true piety, becauſe it ſtop'd at no difficulties, was not alter'd or leſſen'd by any human appearances. It firſt of all carry'd him, againſt all ſhew of happineſs, from his own kindred and country, into a ſtrange land, *not knowing whither he went*. It afterwards made him againſt all appearances of nature, when his *body was dead*, *when he was about an hundred years old*, depend upon the promiſe of God, *being fully perſuaded*, *that what God had promis'd*, *he was able to perform*. It was this ſame faith, that againſt ſo many pleas of nature, ſo many

appear-

appearances of reaſon, prevail'd upon him to *offer up Iſaac —— accounting that God was able to raiſe him up from the dead.* Heb xi. 17, 19

Now this faith is the true pattern of Chriſtian reſignation to the divine pleaſure; you are to thank and praiſe God, not only for things agreeable to you, that have the appearance of happineſs and comfort; but when you are like *Abraham*, called from all appearances of comfort, to be a *pilgrim* in a ſtrange land, to part with an *only ſon*; being as fully perſuaded of the divine Goodneſs in all things that happen to you, as *Abraham* was of the divine promiſe, when there was the leaſt appearance of its being performed.

This is true Chriſtian reſignation to God, which requires no more to the ſupport of it, than ſuch a plain aſſurance of the goodneſs of God, as *Abraham* had of his veracity. And if you aſk yourſelf, what greater reaſon *Abraham* had to depend upon the divine Veracity, than you have to depend upon the divine Goodneſs, you will find that none can be given.

You cannot therefore look upon this as an unneceſſary, high pitch of perfection, ſince the want of it implies the want not of any high notions, but of a plain and ordinary faith in the moſt certain doctrines both of natural and reveal'd religion.

Thus much concerning reſignation to the divine Will, as it ſignifies a thankful approbation

bation of God's *general providence:* It is now to be conſider'd, as it ſignifies a *thankful* acceptance of God's *particular providence* over us.

Every man is to conſider himſelf as a particular object of God's providence; under the ſame care and protection of God, as if the world had been made for him alone. It is not by chance that any man is born at ſuch a *time*, of ſuch *parents*, and in ſuch *place* and *condition*. It is as certain, that every *ſoul* comes into the body at ſuch a time, and in ſuch circumſtances, by the expreſs *deſignment* of God, according to *ſome purpoſes* of his will, and for ſome *particular ends*; this is as certain, as that it is by the expreſs deſignment of God, that ſome beings are *Angels*, and others are *men*.

It is as much by the counſel and eternal purpoſe of God, that you ſhould be born in your particular ſtate, and that *Iſaac* ſhould be the ſon of *Abraham*, as that *Gabriel* ſhould be an *Angel*, and *Iſaac* a man.

The Scriptures aſſure us, that it was by divine appointment, that our bleſſed Saviour was born at *Bethlehem*, and at ſuch a time. Now altho' it was owing to the dignity of his perſon and the great importance of his birth, that thus much of the divine counſel was declared to the world concerning the time and manner of it; yet we are as ſure from the ſame Scriptures, that the *time* and *manner* of every man's coming into the world, is according to ſome *eternal purpoſes* and *direction* of

Divine

Divine Providence, and in *such time*, and *place*, and *circumstances*, as are directed and governed by God for *particular ends* of his wisdom and goodness.

This we are as certain of from plain revelation as we can be of any thing. For if we are told, that not a *sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father*; can any thing more strongly teach us, that much greater beings, such as human souls, come not into the world without the care and direction of our heavenly Father? If it is said, *the very hairs of your head are all number'd*; is it not to teach us, that nothing, not the *smallest* things imaginable, happen to us by *chance?* But if the smallest things we can conceive, are declar'd to be under the divine direction, need we, or can we be more plainly taught, that the greatest things of life, such as the *manner* of our coming into the world, our *parents*, the *time*, and other *circumstances* of our birth and condition, are all according to the eternal *purposes*, *direction* and *appointment* of Divine Providence?

When the disciples put this question to our blessed Lord concerning the blind man, *saying*, *Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* He that was the eternal wisdom of God made this answer, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* John ix. 2. 3. Plainly declaring, that the particular circumstances of every

man's birth, the body that he receives, and the condition and ſtate of life into which he is born, are appointed by a ſecret Providence, which directs all things to their particular *times* and *ſeaſons*, and *manner* of exiſtence, that the wiſdom and works of God may be made manifeſt in them all.

As therefore it is thus certain, that we are what we are, as to birth, time, and condition of entring into the world; ſince all that is particular in our ſtate, is the effect of God's particular providence over us, and intended for ſome particular ends both of his glory and our own happineſs, we are by the greateſt obligations of gratitude, called upon to conform and reſign our will to the will of God in all theſe reſpects; thankfully approving and accepting every thing that is particular in our ſtate. Praiſing and glorifying his name for our birth of ſuch *parents*, and in ſuch *circumſtances* of ſtate and condition; being fully aſſur'd, that it was for ſome reaſons of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, that we were ſo born into ſuch particular ſtates of life.

If the man above-mention'd, was born blind, that the *works of God might be manifeſted in him*, had he not great reaſon to praiſe God, for appointing him in ſuch a particular manner, to be the inſtrument of his Glory? And if one perſon is born *here*, and another *there*; if one falls amongſt *riches*, and another into *poverty*; if one receives his fleſh and blood from theſe *parents*, and another from

from thoſe, for as particular ends, as the man was born blind; have not all people the greateſt reaſon to bleſs God, and to be thankful for their *particular ſtate* and *condition*, becauſe all that is particular in it, is as directly intended for the glory of God, and their own good, as the *particular blindneſs* of that man, who was ſo born, that *the works of God might be manifeſted in him?*

How noble an idea does this give us of the divine Omniſcience preſiding over the whole world, and governing ſuch a long chain and combination of ſeeming accidents and chances, to the common and particular advantage of all beings? So that all perſons, in ſuch a wonderful variety of cauſes, accidents and events, ſhould all fall into ſuch particular ſtates, as were foreſeen, and fore-ordain'd to their beſt advantage, and ſo as to be moſt ſerviceable to the wiſe and glorious ends of God's government of all the world.

Had you been any thing elſe than what you are, you had, all things conſider'd, been leſs wiſely provided for than you are now; you had wanted ſome circumſtances and conditions, that are beſt fitted to make you happy your ſelf, and ſerviceable to the glory of God.

Could you ſee all that which God ſees, all that happy chain of cauſes and motives which are to move and invite you to a right courſe of life, you would ſee ſomething to make

you like that ſtate you are in, as fitter for you than any other.

But as you cannot ſee this, ſo it is here that your Chriſtian *faith* and *truſt* in God, is to exerciſe it ſelf, and render you as grateful and thankful for the happineſs of your ſtate, as if you ſaw every thing that contributes to it with your own eyes.

But now if this is the caſe of every man in the world, thus bleſſed with ſome particular ſtate that is moſt convenient for him, how reaſonable is it for every man to will that which God has already will'd for him? And by a pious faith and truſt in the divine goodneſs, thankfully adore and magnify that wiſe providence, which he is ſure has made the beſt choice for him of thoſe things, which he could not chuſe for himſelf.

Every uneaſineſs at our own ſtate, is founded upon comparing it with that of other people. Which is full as unreaſonable, as if a man in a *dropſy* ſhould be angry at thoſe that preſcribe different things to him, from thoſe which are preſcrib'd to people in *health*. For all the different ſtates of *life* are like the different ſtates of *diſeaſes*, what is a remedy to one man in his ſtate, may be poiſon to another.

So that to murmur becauſe you are not as ſome others are, is as if a man in one diſeaſe ſhould murmur that he is not treated like him that is in another. Whereas if he was to have

have his will, he would be kill'd by that, which will prove the cure of another.

It is juſt thus in the various conditions of life; if you give your ſelf up to uneaſineſs, or complain at any thing in your ſtate, you may, for ought you know, be ſo ungrateful to God, as to murmur at that very thing, which is to prove the cauſe of your ſalvation.

Had you it in your power to get that which you think it ſo grievous to want, it might perhaps be that very thing, which of all others, would moſt expoſe you to eternal damnation.

So that whether we conſider the infinite goodneſs of God, that cannot chuſe amiſs for us, or our own great ignorance of what is moſt advantageous to us, there can be nothing ſo reaſonable and pious, as to have no will but that of God's, and deſire nothing for our ſelves, in our *perſons*, our *ſtate*, and *condition*, but that which the good providence of God appoints us.

Farther, as the good providence of God thus introduces us into the world, into ſuch ſtates and conditions of life, as are moſt convenient for us, ſo the ſame unerring wiſdom orders all events and changes in the whole courſe of our lives, in ſuch a manner, as to render them the fitteſt means to exerciſe and improve our virtue.

Nothing hurts us, nothing deſtroys us, but the ill uſe of that liberty, with which God has entruſted us.

We are as ſure that nothing happens to us by chance, as that the world it ſelf was not made by chance; we are as certain that all things happen, and work together for our good, as that God is goodneſs it ſelf. So that a man has as much reaſon to *will* every thing that happens to him, becauſe God *wills* it, as to think that is wiſeſt, which is directed by infinite wiſdom.

This is not cheating or ſoothing our ſelves into any falſe content, or imaginary happineſs; but is a ſatisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God.

For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and reſignation to the divine will too high; nor can we ever be deceiv'd, by thinking that to be beſt for us, which God has brought upon us.

For the providence of God is not more concern'd in the government of *night* and *day*, and the variety of *ſeaſons*, than in the common courſe of events, that ſeem moſt to depend upon the mere wills of men. So that it is as ſtrictly right, to look upon all worldly accidents and changes, all the various turns and alterations in your own life, to be as truly the effects of Divine Providence, as the riſing

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and ſetting of the Sun, or the alterations of the ſeaſons of the year. As you are therefore always to adore the wiſdom of God in the direction of theſe things; ſo it is the ſame reaſonable duty, always to magnify God, as an equal Director of every thing that happens to you in the courſe of your own life.

This holy reſignation and conformity of your will to the will of God, being ſo much the true ſtate of piety, I hope you will think it proper to make this hour of prayer, a conſtant ſeaſon of applying to God for ſo great a gift. That by thus conſtantly praying for it your heart may be habitually diſpos'd towards it, and always in a ſtate of readineſs to look at every thing as God's, and to conſider him in every thing; that ſo every thing that befals you, may be receiv'd in the ſpirit of piety, and made a means of exerciſing ſome virtue.

There is nothing that ſo powerfully governs the heart, that ſo ſtrongly excites us to wiſe and reaſonable actions, as a true ſenſe of God's *preſence*. But as we cannot ſee, or apprehend the eſſence of God, ſo nothing will ſo conſtantly keep us under a lively ſenſe of the preſence of God, as this holy reſignation, which attributes every thing to him, and receives every thing as from him.

Could we ſee a *miracle* from God, how would our thoughts be affected with an holy awe and veneration of his preſence! But if we conſider every thing as God's doing, either

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by order or permiſſion, we ſhall then be affected with *common things*, as they would be who ſaw a *miracle*.

For as there is nothing to effect you in a miracle, but as it is the *action* of God, and beſpeaks his *preſence*; ſo when you conſider God, as *acting* in all things, and all events, then all things will become venerable to you, like *miracles*, and fill you with the ſame awful ſentiments of the divine preſence.

Now you muſt not reſerve the exerciſe of this pious temper, to any particular times or occaſions, or fancy how *reſign'd* you will be to God, if ſuch or ſuch trials ſhould happen. For this is amuſing your ſelf with the *notion* or *idea* of reſignation, inſtead of the virtue it ſelf.

Don't therefore pleaſe your ſelf with thinking, how piouſly you would act and ſubmit to God in a *plague*, a *famine*, or *perſecution*, but be intent upon the perfection of the preſent day; and be aſſur'd, that the beſt way of ſhewing a *true zeal*, is to make *little things* the occaſions of *great piety*.

Begin therefore in the ſmalleſt matters, and moſt ordinary occaſions, and accuſtom your mind to the daily exerciſe of this pious temper, in the loweſt occurrences of life. And when a *contempt*, an *affront*, a little *injury*, *loſs*, or *diſappointment*, or the ſmalleſt events of every day, continually raiſe your mind to God in proper acts of reſignation, then you may juſtly hope, that you ſhall be number'd amongſt

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thoſe that are reſign'd and thankful to God in the greateſt trials and afflictions.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Evening prayer. Of the nature and neceſſity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confeſſion of all our ſins. How we are to fill our minds with a juſt horror and dread of all ſin.

I Am now come to ſix o'clock in the evening, which according to the Scripture account is call'd the twelfth, or *laſt hour* of the day. This is a time ſo proper for Devotion, that I ſuppoſe nothing need be ſaid to recommend it as a ſeaſon of prayer, to all people that profeſs any regard to piety.

As the labour and action of every ſtate of life is generally over at this hour, ſo this is the proper time for every one to call himſelf to account, and review all his behaviour, from the firſt action of the day. The neceſſity of this examination, is founded upon the neceſſity of repentance. For if it be neceſſary to repent of all our ſins, if the guilt of unrepented ſins ſtill continues upon us, then it is neceſſary, not only that all our ſins, but the particular circumſtances and aggravations of them, be

known and recollected, and brought to repentance.

The Scripture ſaith, *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* Which is as much as to ſay, that then only our ſins are forgiven, and we cleans'd from the guilt and unrighteouſneſs of them, when they are thus confeſs'd, and repented of.

1 John. i. 9.

There ſeems therefore to be the greateſt neceſſity, that all our daily actions be conſtantly obſerv'd, and brought to account, leſt by a negligence we load ourſelves with the guilt of unrepented ſins.

This examination therefore of our ſelves every evening, is not only to be conſider'd as a *commendable rule*, and fit for a wiſe man to obſerve, but as ſomething that is as neceſſary as a daily confeſſion and repentance of our ſins; becauſe this daily repentance is of very little ſignificancy, and loſes all its chief benefit, unleſs it be a *particular confeſſion* and repentance of the ſins of that day. This examination is neceſſary to repentance in the ſame manner as *time* is neceſſary; you cannot repent or expreſs your ſorrow, unleſs you allow ſome time for it; nor can you repent, but ſo far as you *know* what it is that you are repenting of. So that when it is ſaid, that it is neceſſary to examine and call your actions to account; it is only ſaying, that it is neceſſary

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to know *what*, and *how many* things you are to repent of.

You perhaps have hitherto only used your self to confess your self a sinner in *general*, and ask forgiveness in the *gross*, without any *particular remembrance*, or contrition for the particular sins of that day. And by this practice you are brought to believe, that the same short, general form of confession of sin in general, is a sufficient repentance for every day.

Suppose another person should hold, that a confession of our sins in general *once* at the end of *every week* was sufficient; and that it was as well to confess the sins of *seven days* all together, as to have a particular repentance at the end of every day.

I know you sufficiently see the unreasonableness and impiety of this opinion, and that you think it is easy enough to shew the danger and folly of it.

Yet you cannot bring one argument against such an opinion, but what will be as good an argument against such a *daily repentance*, as does not call the *particular sins* of that day to a strict account.

For as you can bring no *express text* of Scripture against such an opinion, but must take all your arguments from the nature of *repentance*, and the necessity of a *particular repentance* for particular sins, so every argument of that kind, must as fully prove the necessity of being very particular in our repentance of the sins of every day. Since nothing can be justly

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ſaid againſt leaving the ſins of the *whole week* to be repented for in the *groſs*, but what may as juſtly be ſaid againſt a daily repentance, which conſiders the ſins of that day only in the *groſs*.

Would you tell ſuch a man, that a daily confeſſion was neceſſary to keep up an abhorrence of ſin, that the mind would grow harden'd and ſenſeleſs of the guilt of ſin without it? And is not this as good a reaſon for requiring that your daily repentance be *very expreſs* and *particular* for your daily ſins? For if confeſſion is to raiſe an abhorrence of ſin, ſurely that confeſſion which *conſiders* and *lays open* your particular ſins, that brings them to light with all their circumſtances and aggravations, that requires a particular ſorowful acknowledgment of every ſin, muſt in a much greater degree fill the mind with an abhorrence of ſin, than that which only in *one* and the *ſame form* of words confeſſes you only to be a ſinner in *general*. For as this is nothing but what the *greateſt Saint* may juſtly ſay of himſelf, ſo the daily repeating of only ſuch a confeſſion, has nothing in it to make you truly aſhamed of your own way of life.

Again; muſt you not tell ſuch a man, that by leaving himſelf to ſuch a *weekly*, *general* confeſſion, he would be in great danger of forgetting a great many of his ſins? But is there any ſenſe or force in this argument, unleſs you ſuppoſe that our ſins are all to be remember'd, and brought to a particular repentance? And

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is it not as neceſſary, that our particular ſins be not forgotten, but particularly remember'd in our daily, as in a repentance at any other time?

So that every argument for a daily confeſſion and repentance, is the ſame argument for the confeſſion and repentance of the *particular ſins* of every day.

Becauſe daily confeſſion has no other reaſon or neceſſity, but our daily ſins; and therefore is nothing of what it ſhould be, but ſo far as it is a repentance and ſorrowful acknowledgment of the ſins of the day.

You would, I ſuppoſe, think yourſelf chargeable with great impiety, if you was to go to bed without confeſſing yourſelf to be a ſinner and aſking pardon of God; you would not think it ſufficient that you did ſo yeſterday. And yet if without any regard to the preſent day, you only repeat the ſame form of words that you uſed yeſterday, the ſins of the preſent day may juſtly be looked upon to have had no repentance. For if the ſins of the preſent day require a new confeſſion, it muſt be ſuch a new confeſſion as is proper to itſelf. For it is the *ſtate* and *condition* of every day, that is to determine the *ſtate* and *manner* of your repentance in the evening; otherwiſe the ſame general form of words is rather an empty formality, that has the appearance of a duty, than ſuch a true performance of it, as is neceſſary to make it truly uſeful to you.

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Let it be ſuppoſed that on a certain day you have been guilty of theſe ſins; that you have told a *vain lye* upon your ſelf, aſcribing ſomething falſely to yourſelf through pride; that you have been guilty of *detraction*, and indulg'd yourſelf in *ſome degree* of intemperance. Let it be ſuppoſed, that on the next day you have lived in a contrary manner; that you have neglected no duty of devotion, and been the reſt of the day innocently employ'd in your proper buſineſs. Let it be ſuppoſed, that on the evening of both theſe days you only uſe the ſame confeſſion in *general*, conſidering it rather as a duty that is to be perform'd every night, than as a repentance that is to be ſuited to the *particular ſtate* of the day.

Can it with any reaſon be ſaid, that each day has had its proper repentance? Is it not as good ſenſe to ſay, there is no difference in the guilt of theſe days, as to ſay that there need be no different repentance at the end of them? Or how can each of them have its proper repentance, but by its having a repentance as large and extenſive, and particular as the guilt of each day?

Again, let it be ſuppos'd, that in that day, when you had been guilty of the three notorious ſins above-mention'd, that in your evening repentance, you had only call'd one of them to mind. Is it not plain, that the other two are unrepented of, and that therefore their guilt ſtill abides upon you? So that you

you are then in the ſtate of him, who commits himſelf to the night without the repentance for ſuch a day, as had betray'd him into two ſuch great ſins.

Now theſe are not needleſs particulars, or ſuch ſcrupulous niceties, as a man need not trouble himſelf about; but are ſuch plain truths, as eſſentially concern the very life of piety. For if repentance is neceſſary, it is full as neceſſary that it be rightly performed, and in due manner.

And I have enter'd into all theſe particulars, only to ſhew you in the plaineſt manner, that *examination*, and a careful review of all the actions of the Day, is not only to be looked upon as a good rule, but as ſomething as neceſſary as repentance itſelf.

If a man is to account for his expences at night, can it be thought a needleſs exactneſs in him, to take notice of every particular expence in the Day?

And if a man is to repent of his ſins at night, can it be thought too great a piece of ſcrupuloſity in him, to know and call to mind what ſins he is to repent of?

Farther; tho' it ſhould be granted, that a confeſſion in *general* may be a ſufficient repentance for the end of ſuch days, as have only the unavoidable frailties of our nature to lament; yet even this fully proves the abſolute neceſſity of this ſelf-examination: for without this examination, who can know that he has gone thro' any day in this manner?

Again: An evening repentance, which thus brings all the actions of the day to account, is not only neceſſary to wipe off the guilt of ſin, but is alſo the moſt certain way to amend and perfect our lives.

For it is only ſuch a repentance as this, that touches the heart, awakens the conſcience, and leaves an horror and deteſtation of ſin upon the mind.

For inſtance: If it ſhould happen, that upon any particular evening, all that you could charge yourſelf with ſhould be this, *viz.* a *haſty*, *negligent* performance of your devotions, or too much time ſpent in an *impertinent converſation*; if the unreaſonableneſs of theſe things were fully reflected upon, and acknowledg'd; if you was then to condemn yourſelf before God for them, and implore his pardon and aſſiſting grace, what could be ſo likely a means to prevent your falling into the ſame faults the next day?

Or if you ſhould fall into them again the next day; yet if they were again brought to the ſame examination and condemnation in the preſence of God, their happening again would be ſuch a proof to you of your own *folly* and *weakneſs*, would cauſe ſuch a *pain* and *remorſe* in your mind, and fill you with ſuch *ſhame* and *confuſion* at yourſelf, as would in all probability make you exceedingly deſirous of greater perfection.

Now in the caſe of repeated ſins, this would be the certain benefit that we ſhould receive

receive from this examination and confeſſion; the mind would thereby be made humble, full of ſorrow and deep compunction, and by degrees forced into amendment.

Whereas a *formal, general* confeſſion, that is only conſider'd as an evening duty, that overlooks the particular miſtakes of the day, and is the ſame whether the day be ſpent ill or well, has little or no effect upon the mind; a man may uſe ſuch a daily confeſſion, and yet go on ſinning and confeſſing all his life, without any remorſe of mind, or true deſire of amendment.

For if your own particular ſins are left out of your confeſſion, your confeſſing of ſin in *general* has no more effect upon your mind, than if you had only confeſs'd, that *all men* in general are *ſinners*. And there is nothing in any confeſſion to ſhew that it is yours, but ſo far as it is a *ſelf-accuſation*, not of ſin in general, or ſuch as is common to all others, but of ſuch *particular ſins*, as are your own *proper ſhame* and reproach.

No other confeſſion, but ſuch as thus diſcovers and accuſes your own particular guilt, can be an act of true ſorrow, or real concern at your own condition. And a confeſſion that is without this ſorrow and compunction of heart, has nothing in it, either to atone for paſt ſins, or to produce in us any true reformation and amendment of life.

To proceed; in order to make this examination ſtill farther beneficial, every man ſhould

oblige himſelf to a certain method in it. As every man has ſomething *particular* in his nature, ſtronger inclinations to *ſome vices* than others, ſome infirmities that *ſtick cloſer* to him, and are harder to be conquer'd than others; and as it is as eaſy for every man to know this of himſelf, as to know whom he likes or diſlikes; ſo it is highly neceſſary, that theſe particularities of our natures and tempers ſhould never eſcape a ſevere trial at our evening repentance: I ſay, a *ſevere trial*, becauſe nothing but a rigorous ſeverity againſt theſe natural tempers, is ſufficient to conquer them.

They are the *right eyes*, that are not to be ſpared; but to be plucked out and caſt from us. For as they are the infirmities of nature, ſo they have the ſtrength of nature, and muſt be treated with great oppoſition, or they will ſoon be too ſtrong for us.

He therefore who knows himſelf moſt of all ſubject to *anger* and *paſſion*, muſt be very *exact* and *conſtant* in his examination of this temper every evening. He muſt find out every ſlip that he has made of that kind, whether in thought, or word, or action; he muſt *ſhame*, and *reproach*, and *accuſe* himſelf before God, for every thing that he has ſaid or done in obedience to his paſſion. He muſt no more allow himſelf to forget the examination of this temper than to forget his whole prayers.

Again;

Again; if you find that *vanity* is your prevailing temper, that is always putting you upon the *adornment* of your perſon, and catching after every thing that *compliments* or *flatters* your abilities, never ſpare or forget this temper in your evening examination; but confeſs to God every vanity of thought, or word, or action, that you have been guilty of, and put yourſelf to all the ſhame and confuſion for it that you can.

In this manner ſhould all people act with regard to their *chief frailty*, to which their nature moſt inclines them. And though it ſhould not immediately do all that they would wiſh, yet by a conſtant practice it would certainly in a ſhort time produce its deſir'd effect.

Farther; as all ſtates and employments of life have their particular *dangers* and *temptations*, and expoſe people more to ſome ſins than others, ſo every man that wiſhes his own improvement, ſhould make it a *neceſſary part* of his evening examination, to conſider how he has avoided, or fallen into ſuch ſins as are moſt common to his ſtate of life.

For as our buſineſs and condition of life has great power over us, ſo nothing but ſuch watchfulneſs at this, can ſecure us from thoſe temptations to which it daily expoſes us.

The *poor man*, from his condition of life, is always in danger of *repining* and *uneaſineſs*; the *rich man* is moſt expos'd to *ſenſuality* and *indulgence*; the *tradeſman* to *lying* and *unreaſo-*

ſonable gains; the *ſcholar* to *pride* and *vanity*; ſo that in every ſtate of life, a man ſhould always, in his examination of himſelf have a ſtrict eye upon thoſe faults, to which his ſtate of life moſt of all expoſes him.

Again; as it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that every good man has enter'd into, or at leaſt propos'd to himſelf *ſome method* of holy living, and ſet himſelf ſome *ſuch rules* to obſerve, as are not common to other people, and only known to himſelf? ſo it ſhould be a conſtant part of his night recollection, to examine how, and in what degree, he has obſerv'd them, and to reproach himſelf before God, for every neglect of them.

By rules, I here mean, ſuch rules as relate to the well-ordering of our *time*, and the *buſineſs* of our common life. Such rules as preſcribe a certain order to all that we are to do, our *buſineſs*, *devotion*, *mortifications*, *readings*, *retirements*, *converſation*, *meals*, *refreſhments*, *ſleep*, and the like.

Now as good rules relating to all theſe things, are certain means of great improvement, and ſuch as all ſerious Chriſtians muſt needs propoſe to themſelves, ſo they will hardly ever be obſerv'd to any purpoſe, unleſs they are made the *conſtant ſubject* of our evening examination.

Laſtly, You are not to content your ſelf with a *haſty general* review of the day, but you muſt enter upon it with deliberation; begin

begin with the *first action* of the day and proceed step by step, through every particular matter that you have been concern'd in, and so let no *time*, *place*, or *action* be overlook'd.

An examination thus manag'd, will in a little time make you as different from your self, as a *wise man* is different from an *idiot*. It will give you such a newness of mind, such a spirit of wisdom, and desire of perfection, as you was an entire stranger to before.

Thus much concerning the *evening examination*.

I proceed now to lay before you such considerations, as may fill your mind with a just dread and horror of all sin, and help you to confess your own in the most passionate contrition and sorrow of heart.

Consider first, how odious all sin is to God, what a mighty baseness it is, and how abominable it renders sinners in the sight of God. That it is sin alone that makes the great difference betwixt an angel, and the devil; and that every sinner is, so far as he sins, a friend of the devil's, and carrying on his work against God. That sin is a greater blemish and defilement of the soul, than any filth or disease is a defilement of the body. And to be content to live in sin, is a much greater baseness, than to desire to wallow in the mire, or love any bodily impurity.

Conſider how you muſt abhor a creature that delighted in nothing but filth and naſtineſs, that hated every thing that was decent and clean? and let this teach you to apprehend how odious that ſoul that delights in nothing but the impurity of ſin, muſt appear unto God.

For all ſins, whether of *ſenſuality*, *pride*, or *falſeneſs*, or any other *irregular* paſſion, are nothing elſe but the filth, and impure diſeaſes of the rational ſoul. And all righteouſneſs is nothing elſe but the *purity*, the *decency*, the *beauty* and *perfection* of that ſpirit, which is made in the image of God.

Again; learn what horror you ought to have for the guilt of ſin, from the greatneſs of that *atonement* which has been made for it.

God made the world by the breath of his mouth, by a word ſpeaking; but the redemption of the world has been a work of longer labour.

How eaſily God can create beings, we learn from the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*; but how difficult it is for infinite mercy to forgive ſins, we learn from that *coſtly atonement*, thoſe *bloody ſacrifices*, thoſe *pains* and *penances*, thoſe *ſickneſſes* and *deaths*, which all muſt be undergone, before the guilty ſinner is fit to appear in the preſence of God.

Ponder theſe great truths: That the Son of God was forc'd to become man, to be partaker of all our infirmities; to undergo a poor, pain-

painful, miſerable, and contemptible life, to be perſecuted, hated, and at laſt nail'd to a Croſs, that by ſuch ſufferings he might render God propitious to that nature in which he ſuffer'd,

That all the bloody ſacrifices and atonements of the *Jewiſh* Law, were to repreſent the neceſſity of this *great ſacrifice*, and the *great Diſpleaſure* God bore to ſinners.

That the world is ſtill under the *curſe* of ſin, and *certain marks* of God's diſpleaſure at it; ſuch as *famines*, *plagues*, *tempeſts*, *ſickneſs*, *diſeaſes* and *death*.

Conſider that all the ſons of *Adam* are to go through a painful, ſickly life, denying and mortifying their natural appetites, and crucifying the luſts of the fleſh, in order to have a ſhare in the atonement of our Saviour's death.

That all their penances and ſelf-denials, all their tears and repentance, are only made available by that great Interceſſion, which is ſtill making for them at the right hand of God.

Conſider theſe great truths; that this *myſterious redemption*, all theſe *ſacrifices* and *ſufferings*, both of God and man, are only to *remove* the guilt of ſin; and then let this teach you with what tears and contrition, you ought to purge yourſelf from it.

After this general conſideration of the guilt of ſin, which has done ſo much miſchief to your nature, and expos'd it to ſo great puniſhment,

niſhment, and made it ſo odious to God, that nothing leſs than ſo great an atonement of the Son of God, and ſo great repentance of our own, can reſtore us to the divine favour:

Conſider next your own *particular ſhare* in the guilt of ſin. And if you would know with what zeal you ought to repent your ſelf, conſider how you would exhort another ſinner to repentance; and what repentance and amendment you would expect from him, whom you judg'd to be the *greater ſinner* in the world.

Now this caſe every man may juſtly reckon to be his own. And you may fairly look upon your ſelf to be the greateſt ſinner that you *know* in the world.

For though you may know abundance of people to be guilty of ſome groſs ſins, with which you cannot charge your ſelf, yet you may juſtly condemn your ſelf, as the greateſt ſinner that you *know*. And that for theſe following reaſons:

Firſt, Becauſe you *know more* of the folly of your own heart, than you do of other peoples; and can charge yourſelf with *various ſins*, that you only know of your ſelf, and cannot be *ſure* that other ſinners are guilty of them. So that as you know more of the *folly*, the *baſeneſs*, the *pride*, the *deceitfulneſs* and *negligence* of your own heart, than you do of any ones elſe, ſo you have juſt reaſon

to consider your self as the greatest sinner that you know: Because you know more of the *greatness* of your own sins, than you do of other peoples.

Secondly, The greatness of our guilt arises chiefly from the greatness of God's goodness towards us, from the particular *graces* and *blessings*, the *favours*, the *lights*, and *instructions* that we have receiv'd from him.

Now as these graces and blessings, and the multitude of God's favours towards us, are the great aggravations of our sins against God, so they are *only known* to our selves. And therefore every sinner *knows more* of the *aggravations* of his own guilt, than he does of other peoples; and consequently may justly look upon himself to be the greatest sinner that he knows.

How good God has been to other sinners, what *light* and *instruction* he has vouchsaf'd to them; what blessings and *graces* they have receiv'd from him; how often he has touch'd their hearts with holy inspirations, you cannot tell. But all this you know of your self, therefore you know greater aggravations of your own guilt, and are able to charge your self with greater ingratitude than you can charge upon other people.

And this is the reason, why the *greatest saints* have in all ages condemn'd themselves as the greatest sinners, because they knew

some

ſome aggravations of their own ſins, which they could not know of other peoples.

The right way therefore to fill your heart with true contrition, and a deep ſenſe of your own ſins, is this: You are not to conſider, or compare the *outward form*, or *courſe* of your life, with that of other peoples, and then think yourſelf to be leſs ſinful than they, becauſe the outward courſe of your life is leſs ſinful than theirs.

But in order to know your own guilt, you muſt conſider your own particular circumſtances, your *health*, your *ſickneſs*, your *youth*, or *age*, your *particular* calling, the happineſs of your *education*, the degrees of *light* and *inſtruction* that you have receiv'd, the *good men* that your have convers'd with, the *admonitions* that you have had, the *good books* that you have read, the numberleſs multitude of divine *bleſſings*, *graces*, and *favours* that you have receiv'd, the *good motions* of grace that you have reſiſted, the *reſolutions* of amendment that you have often broken, and the *checks* of conſcience that you have diſregarded.

For it is from theſe circumſtances, that every one is to ſtate the *meaſure* and *greatneſs* of his own guilt. And as you know only theſe circumſtances of your own ſins, ſo you muſt neceſſarily know how to charge your ſelf with higher degrees of guilt, than you can charge upon other people.

God

God Almighty knows greater ſinners, it may be, than you are; becauſe he ſees and knows the circumſtances of all mens ſins: But your own heart, if it is faithful to you, can diſcover no guilt ſo great as your own; becauſe it can only ſee in you thoſe circumſtances, on which great part of the guilt of ſin is founded.

You may ſee ſins in other people, that you cannot charge upon yourſelf; but then you know a number of circumſtances of your own guilt, that you cannot lay to their Charge.

And perhaps that perſon that appears at ſuch a diſtance from your virtue, and ſo odious in your eyes, would have been much better than you are had he been altogether in your circumſtances, and received all the ſame favours and graces from God that you have.

This is a very *humbling reflection*, and very proper for thoſe people to make, who meaſure their virtue, by comparing the outward courſe of their lives with that of other peoples.

For look at whom you will, however different from you in his way of life, yet you can never know that he has reſiſted *ſo much* divine grace as you have; or that in all your circumſtances, he would not have been *much truer* to his duty than you are.

Now this is the reaſon why I deſir'd you to conſider, how you would exhort that man to confeſs and bewail his ſins, whom you look'd upon to be one of the *greateſt ſinners*.

Becauſe

Becauſe if you will deal juſtly, you muſt fix the charge at *home*, and look no farther than *yourſelf*. For God has given no one any power of knowing the *true greatneſs* of any ſins, but his own: and therefore the greateſt ſinner that every one *knows*, is himſelf.

You may eaſily ſee how ſuch a one in the outward courſe of his life breaks the laws of God; but then you can never ſay, that had you been exactly in all his circumſtances, that you ſhould not have broken them more than he has done.

A ſerious and frequent reflection upon theſe things, will mightily tend to humble us in our own eyes, make us very apprehenſive of the greatneſs of our own guilt, and very tender in cenſuring and condemning other people.

For who would dare to be ſevere againſt other people, when for ought he can tell, the ſeverity of God may be more due to him, than to them? Who would exclaim againſt the guilt of others, when he conſiders that he knows more of the greatneſs of his own guilt, than he does of theirs?

How often you have reſiſted God's holy Spirit; how many motives to goodneſs you have diſregarded; how many particular bleſſings you have ſinn'd againſt; how many good reſolutions you have broken; how many checks and admonitions of conſcience you have ſtifled, you very well know: But how often this has been the caſe of other ſinners, you know not.

And

And therefore the greateſt ſinner that you know, muſt be yourſelf.

Whenever therefore you are *angry* at ſin or ſinners, whenever you *read* or *think* of God's indignation and wrath at wicked men, let this teach you to be the moſt ſevere in your cenſure, and moſt humble and contrite in the acknowledgment and confeſſion of your own ſins, beeauſe you know of no ſinner equal to yourſelf.

Laſtly, to conclude this chapter: Having thus examin'd and confeſs'd your ſins at this hour of the evening, you muſt afterwards look upon yourſelf, as ſtill oblig'd to betake yourſelf to prayer again juſt before you go to *bed*.

The ſubject that is moſt proper for your prayers at that time, is *death*. Let your prayers therefore then be wholly upon it, reckoning up all the *dangers*, *uncertainties*, and *terrors* of death; let them contain every thing that can affect and awaken your mind into juſt apprehenſions of it. Let your petitions be all for right ſentiments of the *approach* and *importance* of death; and beg of God, that your mind may be poſſeſs'd with ſuch a ſenſe of its *nearneſs*, that you may have it always in your thoughts, do every thing as in ſight of it, and make every day, a day for preparation for it.

Repreſent to your imagination, that your *bed* is your *grave*; that all things are ready for your

your interment; that you are to have no more to do with this world; and that it will be owing to God's great Mercy, if you ever ſee the light of the Sun again, or have another day to add to your works of piety.

And then commit yourſelf to ſleep, as into the hands of God; as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good; but is to awake amongſt ſpirits that are ſeparate from the body, and waiting for the judgment of the laſt great day.

Such a ſolemn reſignation of yourſelf into the hands of God every evening, and parting with all the world, as if you was never to ſee it any more, and all this in the ſilence and darkneſs of the night, is a practice that will ſoon have excellent effects upon your ſpirit.

For this time of the night is exceeding proper for ſuch prayers and meditations; and the likeneſs which *ſleep* and *darkneſs* have to *death*, will contribute very much to make your thoughts about it the more deep and affecting. So that I hope you will not let a time, ſo proper for ſuch prayers, be ever paſs'd over without them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Conclusion. Of the Excellency and Greatness of a devout Spirit.

I HAVE now finish'd what I intended in this Treatise. I have explain'd the nature of devotion, both as it signifies a life devoted to God, and as it signifies a regular method of daily prayer. I have now only to add a word or two in recommendation of a life governed by this spirit of devotion.

For though it is as reasonable to suppose it the desire of all Christians to arrive at Christian Perfection, as to suppose, that all sick men desire to be restor'd to perfect health; yet experience shews us, that nothing wants more to be press'd, repeated, and forc'd upon our minds, than the plainest rules of Christianity.

Voluntary poverty, *virginity*, and devout *retirement*, have been here recommended, as things not necessary, yet highly beneficial to those that would make the way to perfection the most easy and certain. But Christian perfection itself is ty'd to no particular form of life; but is to be attained, tho' not with the same ease, in every state of life.

This has been fully asserted in another place; where it has been shewn, that Christian perfection *calls no one* (necessarily) *to a Cloyster, but to the full performance of those duties, which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all states of life.* Christ. Perfect. p. 2.

So that the whole of the matter is plainly this: *Virginity*, *voluntary poverty*, and ſuch other *reſtraints* of *lawful* things, are not neceſſary to Chriſtian perfection; but are much to be commended in thoſe, who chuſe them as *helps* and *means* of a more *ſafe* and *ſpeedy* arrival at it.

It is only in this manner, and in this ſenſe, that I would recommend any particularity of life; not as if perfection conſiſted in it, but becauſe of its great tendency to produce and ſupport the *true ſpirit* of Chriſtian perfection.

But the thing which is here preſs'd upon all, is, a life of *great* and *ſtrict* devotion; which, I think, has been ſufficiently ſhewn to be equally the duty and happineſs of all orders of men. Neither is there any thing in any particular ſtate of life, that can be juſtly pleaded as a reaſon for any abatements of a devout ſpirit.

But becauſe in this *polite* age of ours, we have ſo *liv'd away* the ſpirit of devotion, that many ſeem afraid even to be ſuſpected of it, imagining *great devotion* to be great *bigotry*; that it is founded in *ignorance* and *poorneſs* of ſpirit, and that *little*, *weak*, and *dejected* minds, are generally the greateſt proficients in it:

It ſhall here be fully ſhewn, that *great* devotion is the *nobleſt* temper of the *greateſt* and *nobleſt* ſouls; and that they who think it receives any advantage from *ignorance* and *poorneſs* of ſpirit, are themſelves not a little, but entirely ignorant of the nature of devotion,

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the nature of God, and the nature of themselves.

People of *fine parts* and *learning*, or of great knowledge in *worldly matters*, may perhaps think it hard to have their *want* of devotion charged upon their *ignorance*. But if they will be content to be try'd by Reason and Scripture, it may soon be made appear, that a *want* of devotion, where-ever it is, either amongst the learned or unlearned, is founded in *gross ignorance*, and the *greatest blindness* and *insensibility* that can happen to a rational creature.

And that devotion is so far from being the effect of a *little* and *dejected* mind, that it must and will be always *highest* in the most *perfect* natures.

And *first*, Who reckons it a sign of a *poor*, *little* mind, for a man to be full of *reverence* and *duty* to his parents, to have the truest *love* and *honour* for his *friend*, or to excel in the *highest instances* of gratitude to his *benefactor*?

Are not these tempers in the *highest* degree in the most exalted and perfect minds?

And yet what is *high devotion*, but the highest exercise of these tempers, of *duty*, *reverence*, *love*, *honour*, and gratitude to the amiable, glorious *parent*, *friend*, and *benefactor* of all mankind?

Is it a true greatness of mind, to reverence the authority of your parents, to fear the displeasure of your friend, to dread the reproaches of your benefactor? and must not this *fear*,

and *dread*, and *reverence*, be much more juſt, and reaſonable, and honourable, when they are in the *higheſt degree* towards God?

Now as the higher theſe tempers are, the more are they eſteem'd amongſt men, and are allow'd to be ſo much the *greater proofs* of a true greatneſs of mind; ſo the higher and greater theſe ſame tempers are towards God, ſo much the more do they prove the nobility, excellence, and greatneſs of the mind.

So that ſo long as *duty* to parents, *love* to friends, and *gratitude* to benefactors, are thought great and honourable tempers; devotion, which is nothing elſe but duty, love, and gratitude to God, muſt have the higheſt place amongſt our higheſt virtues.

If a *Prince* out of his *mere goodneſs* ſhould ſend you a pardon by one of his *ſlaves*, would you think it a part of your duty to receive the *ſlave* with marks of *love*, *eſteem*, and gratitude for his great kindneſs, in bringing you ſo great a gift; and at the ſame time think it a *meanneſs* and *poorneſs* of ſpirit, to ſhew *love*, *eſteem* and *gratitude* to the Prince, who of his own goodneſs freely ſent you the pardon?

And yet this would be as reaſonable, as to ſuppoſe, that love, eſteem, honour, and gratitude, are *noble tempers*, and inſtances of a *great ſoul*, when they are paid to our fellow-creatures; but the effects of a *poor*, *ignorant*, *dejected* mind, when they are paid to God.

Farther; that part of devotion which expreſſes itſelf in *ſorrowful* confeſſions, and *penitential*

tential tears of a broken and a contrite heart, is very far from being any ſign of a *little* and *ignorant* mind.

For who does not acknowledge it an inſtance of an *ingenuous*, *generous*, and *brave* mind, to acknowledge a fault, and aſk pardon for any offence? And are not the *fineſt* and *moſt improv'd* minds, the moſt remarkable for this excellent temper?

Is it not alſo allow'd, that the *ingenuity* and *excellence* of a man's ſpirit is much ſhewn, when his ſorrow and indignation at himſelf riſes in proportion to the folly of his crime, and the *goodneſs* and *greatneſs* of the perſon he has offended?

Now if things are thus, then the *greater* any man's mind is, the more he *knows* of God and himſelf, the more will he be diſpos'd to proſtrate himſelf before God in all the *humbleſt acts* and expreſſions of repentance.

And the greater the *ingenuity*, the *generoſity*, *judgment*, and *penetration* of his mind is, the more will he exerciſe and indulge a *paſſionate*, *tender* ſenſe of God's juſt diſpleaſure; and the more he knows of the greatneſs, the goodneſs, and perfection of the divine nature, the fuller of ſhame and confuſion will he be at his own ſins and ingratitude.

And on the other hand, the more *dull* and *ignorant* any ſoul is, the more *baſe* and *ungenerous* it naturally is, the more *ſenſeleſs* it is of the goodneſs and purity of God, ſo much

the more averſe will it be to all acts of *humble confeſſion* and *repentance*.

Devotion therefore is ſo far from being beſt ſuited to *little ignorant* minds, that a *true elevation* of ſoul, a *lively ſenſe* of honour, and *great knowledge* of God and our ſelves, are the greateſt *natural helps* that our devotion hath.

And on the other hand, it ſhall here be made appear by variety of arguments, that *indevotion* is founded in the moſt exceſſive ignorance.

And, *Firſt*, Our bleſſed Lord, and his Apoſtles, were eminent inſtances of great and frequent devotion. Now if we will grant, (as all Chriſtians muſt grant) that their great devotion was founded in a true knowledge of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of man; then it is plain, that all thoſe that are inſenſible of the duty of devotion, are in this exceſſive ſtate of ignorance, they neither know God, nor themſelves, nor devotion.

For if a right knowledge in theſe three reſpects. produces great devotion, as in the caſe of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, then a neglect of devotion muſt be chargeable upon ignorance.

Again; how comes it that moſt people have recourſe to devotion, when they are in ſickneſs, diſtreſs, or fear of death? Is it not becauſe this ſtate ſhews them *more* of the want of

of God, and their own weakneſs, than they perceive at other times? Is it not becauſe their infirmities, their approaching end *convinces* them of ſomething, which they did not *half perceive* before?

Now if devotion at theſe ſeaſons, is the effect of a *better knowledge* of God, and our ſelves, then the neglect of devotion at other times, is always owing to great ignorance of God, and our ſelves.

Farther; as indevotion is ignorance, ſo it is the moſt *ſhameful* ignorance, and ſuch as is to be charged with the *greateſt folly*.

This will fully appear to any one that conſiders, by what rules we are to judge of the excellency of any knowledge, or the ſhamefulneſs of any ignorance.

Now *knowledge* it ſelf would be no *excellence*, nor ignorance any *reproach* to us, but that we are *rational* creatures.

But if this be true, then it follows plainly, that that knowledge which is moſt *ſuitable* to our rational nature, and which moſt concerns us, as ſuch, to know, is our *higheſt*, *fineſt* knowledge; and that ignorance which relates to things that are moſt *eſſential* to us, as rational creatures, and which we are moſt concern'd to know, is, of all others, the moſt *groſs* and *ſhameful* ignorance.

If therefore there be any things that concern us more than others, is there be any truths that are more to us than all others, he that has the fulleſt knowledge of theſe things,

that ſees theſe truths in the *cleareſt*, *ſtrongeſt* light, has, of all others, *as a rational creature*, the cleareſt underſtanding, and the ſtrongeſt parts.

If therefore our relation to God be our *greateſt relation*, if our advancement in his favour be our *higheſt advancement*, he that has the *higheſt notions* of the excellence of this relation, he that moſt *ſtrongly* perceives the *higheſt worth*, and great *value* of holineſs and virtue, that judges every thing *little*, when compar'd with it, proves himſelf to be maſter of the *beſt*, and *moſt excellent* knowledge.

If a *Judge* had fine ſkill in *painting*, *architecture*, and *muſick*, but at the ſame time had *groſs* and *confus'd* notions of *equity*, and a *poor*, *dull* apprehenſion of the *value* of juſtice, who would ſcruple to reckon him a *poor ignorant* Judge?

If a *Biſhop* ſhould be a man of great addreſs and ſkill in the arts of preferment, and underſtanding, how to raiſe and enrich his family in the world, but ſhould have no *taſte* or *ſenſe* of the maxims and principles of the *ſaints* and *fathers* of the Church; if he did not conceive the holy nature, and great obligations of his calling, and judge it better to be *crucify'd* to the world, than to live idly in *pomp* and *ſplendor*, who would ſcruple to charge ſuch a Biſhop with want of underſtanding?

If we do not judge, and pronounce after this manner, our reaſon and judgment are but empty ſounds.

But

But now, if a *Judge* is to be reckon'd *ignorant*, if he does not feel and perceive the *value*, and *worth* of juſtice; if a *Biſhop* is to be look'd upon as *void* of underſtanding, if he is more *experienc'd* in other things, than in the *exalted virtues* of his Apoſtolical calling; then all *common Chriſtians* are to be look'd upon as *more* or *leſs* knowing, accordingly as they know more or leſs of thoſe great things, which are the *common* and *greateſt* concern of all Chriſtians.

If a *Gentleman* ſhould fancy that the *Moon* is no bigger than it appears to the *eye*, that it ſhines with its *own light*, that all the *Stars* are only ſo many ſpots of light; if after reading books of *Aſtronomy*, he ſhould ſtill continue in the ſame opinion, moſt people would think he had but a poor apprehenſion.

But if the ſame perſon ſhould think it better to provide for a *ſhort life* here, than to prepare for a *glorious eternity* hereafter, that it was better to be *rich*, than to be *eminent* in piety, his *ignorance* and *dulneſs* would be too great to be compar'd to any thing elſe.

There is no knowledge that deſerves ſo much as the name of it, but that which we call *judgment*.

And that is the moſt clear and improv'd underſtanding, which *judges* beſt of the *value* and *worth* of things. All the reſt is but the capacity of an *animal*, it is but meer *ſeeing* and *hearing*.

And

And there is no excellence of any knowledge in us, till we exercise our *judgment*, and judge well of the *value* and *worth* of things.

If a man had *eyes* that could see beyond the *Stars*, or pierce into the *heart* of the earth, but could not see the things that were before him, or discern any thing that was serviceable to him, we should reckon that he had but a *very bad sight*.

If another had *ears* that receiv'd sounds from the world in the *Moon*, but could hear nothing that was said or done upon earth, we should look upon him to be as *bad* as *deaf*.

In like manner, if a man has a *memory* that can retain a great many things; if he has a *wit* that is *sharp* and *acute* in arts and sciences, or an imagination that can wander agreeably in *fictions*, but has a *dull*, *poor* apprehension of his *duty* and *relation* to God, of the *value* of piety, or the *worth* of moral virtue, he may very justly be reckon'd to have a *bad understanding*. He is but like the man that can only *see* and *hear* such things as are of no benefit to him.

As certain therefore as piety, virtue, and eternal happiness are of the most concern to man, as certain as the immortality of our nature, and relation to God, are the most glorious circumstances of our nature, so certain is it, that he who *dwells most* in contemplation of them, whose heart is *most affected* with them, who sees *farthest* into them, who best comprehends the *value* and *excellency* of them,

who

who judges all worldly attainments to be *mere bubbles* and *ſhadows*, in compariſon of them, proves himſelf to have of all others, the *fineſt underſtanding*, and the *ſtrongeſt judgment*.

And if we don't reaſon after this manner, or allow this method of reaſoning, we have no arguments to prove, that there is any ſuch thing as a *wiſe man*, or a *fool*.

For a man is prov'd to be a *natural*, not becauſe he wants any of his *ſenſes*, or is incapable of *every thing*, but becauſe he has no *judgment*, and is entirely ignorant of the *worth* and *value* of things, he will perhaps chuſe a *fine coat*, rather than a *large eſtate*.

And as the eſſence of *ſtupidity* conſiſts in the entire want of *judgment*, in an ignorance of the *value* of things, ſo on the other hand, the eſſence of wiſdom and knowledge muſt conſiſt in the *excellency* of our judgment, or in the knowledge of the *worth* and *value* of things.

This therefore is an undeniable proof, that he who knows *moſt* of the value of the beſt things, who judges moſt rightly of the things which are of moſt concern to him, who had rather have his ſoul in a ſtate of chriſtian perfection, than the greateſt ſhare of worldly happineſs, has the *higheſt wiſdom*, and is at the fartheſt diſtance from men that are *naturals*, that any knowledge can place him.

On the other hand, he that can talk the *learned* languages, and repeat a great deal of *Hiſtory*,

Hiſtory, but prefers the *indulgence* of his body to the *purity* and *perfection* of his ſoul, who is *more* concern'd to get a *name*, or an *eſtate* here, than to live in eternal glory hereafter, is in the neareſt ſtate to that *natural*, who chuſes a *painted coat*, rather than a *large eſtate*.

He is not call'd a *natural* by men, but he muſt appear to God, and heavenly Beings, as in a more exceſſive ſtate of ſtupidity, and will ſooner or later certainly appear ſo to himſelf.

But now if this be undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be a *fool*, but by ſhewing that he has no knowledge of things that are *good* and *evil* to himſelf, then it is undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be *wiſe*, but by ſhewing that he has the *fulleſt* knowledge of things that are his *greateſt* good, and his greateſt evil.

If therefore God be our greateſt good; if there can be no good but in his favour, nor any evil but in departing from him, then it is plain, that he who judges it the beſt thing he can do to pleaſe God to the utmoſt of his power, who worſhips and adores him with all his heart and ſoul, who had rather have a *pious mind*, than all the *dignities* and *honours* in the world, ſhews himſelf to be in the *higheſt ſtate* of human wiſdom.

To proceed; we know how our bleſſed Lord acted in an human body; it was *his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in heaven.*

And

And if any number of heavenly ſpirits were to leave their habitations in the light of God, and be for a while united to human bodies, they would certainly tend towards God in all their actions, and be as heavenly as they could, in a ſtate of fleſh and blood.

They would certainly act in this manner, becauſe they would know that God was the *only good* of all ſpirits; and that whether they were *in* the body, or *out* of the body, in *heaven*, or on *earth*, they muſt have every degree of their greatneſs and happineſs from God alone.

All human ſpirits therefore, the *more exalted* they are, the more they *know* their divine Original, the *nearer* they come to heavenly ſpirits, by ſo much the more will they live to God in all their actions, and make their whole life a *ſtate of devotion*.

Devotion therefore is the greateſt ſign of a great and noble *genius*, it ſuppoſes a ſoul in its *higheſt ſtate* of knowledge; and none but *little* and *blinded* minds that are ſunk into *ignorance* and *vanity*, are deſtitute of it.

If an human ſpirit ſhould imagine ſome *mighty Prince* to be greater than God, we ſhould take it for a *poor*, *ignorant* creature; all people would acknowledge ſuch an imagination to be the height of ſtupidity.

But if this ſame *human ſpirit* ſhould think it better to be devoted to ſome mighty *Prince*, than to be devoted to God, would not this ſtill be a greater proof of a poor, ignorant, and blinded nature?

Yet

Yet this is what all people do, who think any thing *better*, *greater*, or *wiſer*, than a devout life.

So that which way ſoever we conſider this matter, it plainly appears, that devotion is an inſtance of *great judgment*, of an *elevated nature*; and the want of *devotion* is a certain proof of the want of *underſtanding*.

The greateſt ſpirits of the heathen world, ſuch as *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Epictetus*, *Marcus Antonius*, &c. ow'd all their *greatneſs* to the ſpirit of devotion.

They were full of God; their wiſdom and deep contemplations tended only to deliver men from the vanity of the world, the ſlavery of bodily paſſions, that they might act as *ſpirits* that came from God, and were ſoon to return to him.

Again; To ſee the dignity and greatneſs of a devout ſpirit, we need only compare it with other tempers, that are choſen in the room of it.

St. *John* tells us, that *all in the world* (that is, all the tempers of a worldly life) *is the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life.*

Let us therefore conſider, what *wiſdom* or *excellency* of mind there is required to qualify a man for theſe delights.

Let us ſuppoſe a man given up to the pleaſures of the body; ſurely this can be no ſign of a *fine* mind, or an *excellent* ſpirit: For if he

he has but the temper of an *animal*, he is great enough for these enjoyments.

Let us suppose him to be devoted to *honours* and *splendors*, to be fond of *glitter* and *equipage*; now if this temper requir'd any great *parts* or *fine* understanding to make a man capable of it, it would prove the world to abound with *great wits*.

Let us suppose him to be in love with *riches*, and to be so eager in the pursuit of them, as never to think he has enough; now this passion is so far from supposing any *excellent sense*, or *great understanding*, that blindness and folly are the best supports that it hath.

Let us lastly suppose him in another light, not singly devoted to any of these passions, but, as it mostly happens, governed by all of them in their turns; does this shew a more exalted nature, than to spend his days in the service of any one of them?

For to have a *taste* for these things, and to be devoted to them, is so far from arguing any *tolerable parts* or understanding, that they are suited to the *dullest*, *weakest* minds, and require only a great deal of pride and folly to be greatly admired.

But now let *Libertines* bring any such charge as this, if they can, against devotion. They may as well endeavour to charge light with every thing that belongs to darkness.

Let them but grant that there is a God, and Providence, and then they have granted enough

enough to justify the wisdom, and support the honour of devotion.

For if there is an infinitely wise and good Creator, in whom we live, move, and have our being, whose Providence governs all things in all places, surely it must be the highest act of our *understanding* to conceive rightly of him; it must be the noblest instance of *judgment*, the most exalted temper of our nature, to worship and adore this universal Providence, to conform to its laws, to study its wisdom, and to live and act every where, as in the presence of this infinitely good and wise Creator.

Now he that lives thus, lives in the spirit of devotion.

And what can shew such great parts, and so fine an understanding, as to live in this temper?

For if God is *wisdom*, surely he must be the wisest man in the world, who *most* conforms to the wisdom of God, who *best* obeys his Providence, who enters *farthest* into his designs, and does all he can, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

A devout man makes a true use of his reason; he sees through the *vanity* of the world, discovers the *corruption* of his nature, and the *blindness* of his passions. He lives by a *law* which is not visible to *vulgar eyes*; he enters into the world of *spirits*; he compares the greatest things, sets *eternity* against *time*; and chuses rather to be for ever great in the pre-

sence

ſence of God when he dies, than to have the greateſt ſhare of worldly pleaſures whilſt he lives.

He that is devout, is full of theſe *great thoughts*; he lives upon theſe noble reflections, and conducts himſelf by *rules* and *principles*, which can only be apprehended, admired, and loved by *reaſon*.

There is nothing therefore that ſhews ſo great a *genius*, nothing that ſo raiſes us above *vulgar ſpirits*, nothing that ſo plainly declares an *heroick* greatneſs of mind, as great devotion.

When you ſuppoſe a man to be a *ſaint*, or all devotion, you have raiſed him as much above all other conditions of life, as a *Philoſopher* is above an *animal*.

Laſtly, *Courage* and *bravery* are words of a great ſound, and ſeem to ſignify an *heroick* ſpirit; but yet *humility*, which ſeems to be the *loweſt*, *meaneſt* part of devotion, is a more certain argument of a *noble* and *courageous* mind.

For humility contends with greater enemies, is more conſtantly engaged, more violently aſſaulted, bears more, ſuffers more, and requires greater courage to ſupport itſelf, than any inſtances of worldly bravery.

A man that dares be poor and contemptible in the eyes of the world, to approve himſelf to God; that reſiſts and rejects all human glory, that oppoſes the clamour of his paſſions, that meekly puts up all injuries and wrongs, and dares ſtay for his reward till the inviſible hand of God gives to every one their proper

places, endures a much *greater trial*, and exerts a *nobler fortitude*, than he that is bold and daring in the fire of battle.

For the boldness of a soldier, if he is a stranger to the spirit of devotion, is rather *weakness* than fortitude; it is at best but *mad passion*, and heated spirits, and has no more true valour in it than the fury of a *tyger*.

For as we cannot lift up a hand, or stir a foot, but by a power that is lent us from God; so bold actions that are not directed by the laws of God, as so many executions of his will, are no more true bravery, than *sedate malice* is Christian *patience*.

Reason is our *universal law*, that obliges us in all places, and at all times; and no actions have any honour, but so far as they are instances of our obedience to reason.

And it is as *base* and *cowardly*, to be bold and daring against the principle of reason and justice, as to be bold and daring in *lying* and *perjury*.

Would we therefore exercise a *true fortitude*, we must do all in the spirit of *devotion*, be valiant against the corruptions of the *world*, and the lusts of the *flesh*, and the temptations of the *devil*: For to be daring and courageous against these enemies, is the noblest bravery that an human mind is capable of.

I have made this digression, for the sake of those, who think a great devotion to be *bigotry* and *poorness* of *spirit*; that by these considerations they may see, how *poor* and *mean* all

all other tempers are, if compared to it, that they may ſee, that all worldly attainments, whether of greatneſs, wiſdom, or bravery, are but *empty ſounds*; and there is nothing *wiſe*, or *great*, or *noble*, in an *human ſpirit*, but rightly to *know*, and heartily *worſhip* and *adore* the great God, that is the *ſupport* and *life* of all ſpirits, whether in *heaven* or on *earth*.

F I N I S.

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